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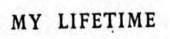


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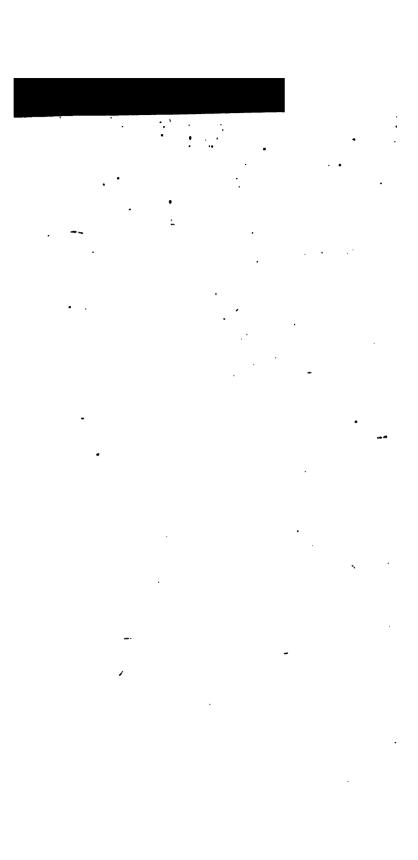
BY THEIR OLD SERVANT



PREFACE.

"You shall tell the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth, So help you, God."

I HAVE told it. It may not amount to much, but I have told it. I have produced my bushel of chaff, and it contains the average grains of wheat, I hope of the average quality. The book is essentially a



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STRANCE PRINCE LONG CHARACT

MY LIFETIME.

VOL. I.

CHAPTER I.

September 9, 1827—"A mad world, my masters!"—Middle-aged London—No photographs, alas!—My "front" name—" Warburton's"—A phantom of the past—A respectable street arab—My first "celebrity at home."

THE man who sits down with a light heart to write his autobiography, of course for a pecuniary consideration, and says that he regards the task as

"A Med World, sty Masters!"

mouths; others are born with silver spoons at the pawnbroker's. I am not quite sure whether I belonged to the second class, but I am quite certain that I

did not belong to the first.

I was born in September, 1827, in what I may call a mild atmosphere of lunacy. There was lunacy in the family; the family (the sane portions) were mixed up with lunacy, and there was lunacy in the neighbourhood. One of my earliest recollections is looking out of a bedroom window on to the large yard of a private madhouse, licensed to take in pauper lunatics under Government supervision. This was at Hoxton, and Hoxton had been celebrated for its madhouses (and conventicles) for the best part of two centuries.

It is not my place—at least not here—to write the history of England, but does anyone quite realise what it was to be born and to live in 1827? The streets were only partially lighted with gas, and that gas was hardly more brilliant than oil. Lanterns holding candles were part of every decent household, and were carried at night, sometimes with, and sometimes without a loaded blunderbuss, in the suburbs. The suburbs then are the City now, and the fields have been gradually driven by bricks and mortar into the country. Railways were then in their swaddlingclothes; omnibuses and "stages" were not numerous. and never went any distance for less than sixpence or a shilling; it was the age of waggons; watchmen had not been superseded by the "New Police"—the "Peelers," as they were called after their inventor, Mr. Robert Peel—the lower and the lower middle-class had no daily papers, morning or evening, the sixpenny Times, Post, Chronicle, and Herald having a circulation confined to clubs, libraries, taverns, and coffeerooms; there was a tax upon paper, a tax upon journals, and a tax upon advertisements. If Johnny

wanted to go to the theatre he was sent to the tobacco shop or the pastry-cook's to look at the long, badlyprinted "bills of the play," to see what the privileged houses had to tempt the public, or what the outside theatres, like the Surrey and the Coburg, were graciously permitted to perform by the courtesy and forbearance of Covent Garden and Drury Lane. Adventurous managers who dared the law in Goodman's Fields at the East End of London occasionally tasted the sweets of six months' imprisonment with hard labour. The light of Heaven was made a source of revenue, and householders who could not afford to pay for many windows had plastered and painted imitations which looked like scenes in a pantomime: the water supply of houses was dear and partial, and sanitary regulations were in the theoretical stage; clothing was expensive, and the distinguishing marks of class had not been obliterated by a tornado of cheapness; the cabs were hackney coaches, clumsy and dear; linkboys earned a living on dark nights by lighting wanderers home; in some of the outhardly a bagman without his gig, and a gig was scarcely more than a sign of respectability without a bagman. There was no early closing movementpeople worked long, but not so hard—there were no Bank holidays nor Saturday half-holidays; but there were more "knockings off," more improvised cricketmatches, quoit-matches, and even skittle-matches, as the stiff shadow of gentility had not then descended like a fog; the little shopkeeper who lived over his shop in the thickest part of the town, and the substantial merchant who lived over his office, bank, or warehouse, in the heart of the City, had his rural delights, within a mile from the Royal Exchange northwards, in the shape of a patch of hired gardenground adorned with a little cupola-surmounted shed. called a "summer-house." Here, in the cool of the evening, and on a Sunday afternoon, he would cultivate horticulture of the simplest kind, and entertain his friends with tobacco and beer. Cards may have occasionally entered into the diversions of these evenings and afternoons, but the gambling, if any, was very moderate, and when the evening shades indicated the time to return home, the "one-horse shay" appeared at the gate, and the happy party returned to the not very distant city, loaded with flowers.

Eighteen hundred and twenty-seven could boast of many solid comforts, if many luxuries that are now within our reach for a few pence had no existence, or were never thought of. One thing—one blessed thing—which we have now, and hardly appreciate as we ought to do, was denied to us in 1827—the poor man's treasure—God's gift to fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters—the gift of photography. Parents and children in 1827 came and went, leaving little trace behind them but pictures drawn by love and coloured by memory.

When the time came for me to have a Christian name, I was duly carried to the great Church of St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, my father, as usual, taking a subordinate but somewhat eccentric part in the ceremony. My front name was an accident. When the clergyman put the inevitable question, no name was prepared, and he was told to call me Jack, Tom, Harry, or Dick. Eventually the first suggested name was selected and softened into John, and John I became and have remained to the present day.

I was not fed upon luxuries, but I suppose I had sufficient to eat and escaped diseases that occasionally afflict more pampered children. I had much liberty of action, and, living a great deal in the open air, I became strong, active, and self-reliant. I had my faults, I admit. I was too fond of exciting the poor maniacs in the yard of the private madhouse. When they were pacing up and down in the monotonous way common amongst mad people, I used to get up at my little window and attract their attention.

almost as full of garret windows as the old Hotel Saxe at Dresden. It stood back in a planted courtyard, walled in with heavy gates, with an old-fashioned bell-pull at least two yards long, and gardens enclosing lodges, stables, orchards, tall and sombre trees, and every feature of a grand old country mansion. Two maiden aunts of mine both held confidential positions in this mansion, which had become one of the most aristocratic private madhouses of the period (1830). Here I was admitted at rare intervals, and allowed to pass my time in a little cottage, embowered in a garden far from the mansion, in a secluded part of the grounds, where a thin, sallowfaced gentle lady with glassy dreamy eyes, lived with an attendant, and dressed like one of the ladies in Stothard's or Bartolozzi's pictures. She was probably born about 1770, and was known as Lady Emily Coutts, and seemed in a faded, far-off way, always to be glad to see me. An old four-octave oblong piano stood in the room—an instrument probably made when she was a girl—and on this she used to play with her thin, delicate, transparent hands, and sing, in a feeble voice, a number of old songs brought back to her by the ancient, time-stained music which I picked out from a white-and-gold music stand. can see her now, with her short-waisted frilled dress, her long thin skirt, her hair curled in rollers, and her opal finger nails.

I knew many relatives on my mother's side, but none on my father's side. To this day I have no idea where we sprang from, and no one has ever come forward to claim me as a kinsman. I had heard that my father's mother had died in a madhouse, and one day (I forget how the knowledge came to me) I heard that my grandfather—my father's father—was living in Islington. I thought I would make his acquaintance. I could find my way anywhere, and taking my

sister with me, who was a little younger than myself, we paid our dutiful, but not altogether disinterested, visit. We were very well received by the old gentleman, who appeared to us to be fairly well off, much better than we were ourselves. He seemed astonished that we had come alone without accident. He was not on speaking terms with his son-that we knew, or had heard—but we had no cause to regret our journey. We had some cake and a glass of wine (I think it was ginger), and were sent away rejoicing with half-a-crown between us. We kept our own council, and after an interval of a few weeks-an interval which we thought decent and proper-we ventured again on the same journey. When we arrived at the house we found it closed and empty, and were told by a neighbour that the "old gentleman" had removed more than a fortnight before our second visit. We never saw or heard of him again. never knew where he lived or when he died, or whether he left a few hundreds, a few thousands, or a few shillings.

stall and stole three apples. These were not satisfying enough, so I committed my second robbery. I went boldly up to a pastrycook's shop, where a tray of pastry was exposed at an open window, and helped myself to a couple of buns. These appeased the children, but the meanness of human nature soon showed itself. They threatened to tell their father. This threat, I need scarcely say, soon closed our

acquaintanceship.

About this time I met my first celebrity—met him fairly, and openly, to talk to him like an equal. was asked by a landlady of a public-house with whom was on speaking terms, if I would like to see "Jack Ketch," or in other words Mr. Calcrast, the public langman? I expressed my delight, and was told to take a copy of the Weekly Dispatch, then a powerful and popular organ, which Mr. Calcraft believed in, to a certain house in a back street in the New North Road. I went off at once, and found Mr. Calcraft in a parlour which opened into the street—a structural peculiarity which Charles Lamb pretended to be delighted with in his cottage in Colebrooke Row, Islington. Calcrast was dressed like a railway navigator on a Sunday, and was seated on a "Windsor" chair, smoking a pipe and waiting for his dose of "Eliza Cook" Publicola," A public-house was opposite, as and in the centre of a small dry, sandy open piece of Bround, facing the tavern, was a tall pole, embedded the ground, which on certain occasions, selected by publican, was greased from top to bottom, and counted by a leg of mutton, to be taken as a prize the cleverest climber. Having had some little Derience in climbing lamp-posts, I consulted my friend on my chances, if I competed for the Ereasy pole" prize. "Jack Ketch" looked at me in Friendly way, and put his paper down while he come outside to explain his views. "Don't try it, youngster," he said, "it's o' no use. It's the soot as does it." This remark required a little explanation, and I got it. "You're too clean," he said, "that's what's the matter with you. Sweeps nearly always wins the prize, acause their legs stick to the grease and the grease sticks to their legs, and it's five to one on soot, wherever you finds it."

CHAPTER II.

Charles and Mary Lamb — "Elia" in Paris, and at Islington—John Clare—How to make a madman—Acrobatic studies—Cricket at daybreak—Copenhagen House —William Hazlitt—Duke—Clapshaw—Lilywhite—Skiutles—Conjurors of the period—Street deucation—Pestalozzi—"Laughing gas"—Margate Hoys—Blackwall—"Protected from sea air"—Whitebait and blackbait—"Spaws"—Greenwich Fair—Nelson heresy.

MIXED up with solid realities like Jack Ketch were airy and spiritual phantoms whose frail bodies carried minds of great delicacy and power, weakened only by hereditary madness. My family association with mental disease brought us into friendly contact with Charles and Mary Lamb, who had both suffered from the curse of lunacy. The madman who is unconscious of his infirmity, is probably the happiest being in existence; but these poor creatures, destined to add an undying grace to English literature, were doubly cursed with a knowledge of their weakness, and a dread caused by bitter experience of what, at any moment, that weakness might lead to. A private mad-house at Islington sheltered Mary Lamb for a time, after she had murdered her mother, and until her brother obtained her release by promising to devote his life to her protection. He must have been painfully conscious of his comparative unfitness for the task, as he had passed a few weeks' voluntary imprisonment in the mad-house at Hoxton, which was overlooked by my little bedroom. How he acquitted himself of his self-imposed duty has been often told by gentle and sympathetic writers, and needs no clumsy repetition. The story will always

be an everlasting credit to English literature.

I was very young when Charles Lamb died, and have a hazy recollection of a little Bob Cratchitt kind of man, who might have been a tutor at a school, with a neat frail body carrying a large head that looked somewhat top-heavy. Much that I know about this little man is, of course, only family hearsay. His habits were eccentric and peculiar. A great-aunt of mine, named Sarah James, who helped in taking charge of his sister, was his friend and companion. She went to Paris with him soon after the Napoleonic peace—the party consisting of Charles and Mary Lamb, old Charles Kenney, the dramatist, and his wife (a French lady), Howard Payne, the playwright, who wrote "Clari, the Maid of Milan," and consequently the English words of "Home, Sweet Home"; Miss Kelly, the actress, and herself. The transit occupied several days, and was made by stage-coach to Dover, packet to Calais, and diligence from town to town. In Paris Lamb led his own independent life—dis-

Lamb's solitary habits were well known, and when he lived at Islington (in the little house in front of the old New River, that had a street door but no passage). and was not home at a reasonable hour, Miss Sarah James put on her bonnet and went out to find him. When found, he was piloted home like an unruly child; and his sense of humour sometimes found vent in picking up stones or brickbats, and pretending to throw them at the passers-by. No one resented this; he looked such a harmless mannikin. Though he lived out of the fashionable radius, and preferred the wild freedom of this existence, he had to go occasionally into "society," and to literary parties. Others were sucked into the same hollow vortex, to be lionised and destroyed. John Clare, the peasant Poet, amongst others, was lured away from his Northamptonshire meadows, and kept up late in hot rooms, listening to the eternal chatter and gabble. Before he went to the inevitable madhouse, he knew what was coming. "Oh, my poor head!" he said, clasping his forehead, "when will they let me go back to peace and the country?"

A half-gipsy boy like myself naturally made the acquaintance of strange playfellows. In the rather mangy fields which then formed part of nearly every suburban street, I met boys who were training themselves laboriously to become acrobats. In the daytime they worked, and worked hard, at the City Saw Mills or some other factory, and in the cool of the evening they tried hard to perfect themselves in the flip-flap, the hand-spring, the splits, the front and back somersault, the up-spring or up-start, and the Bedouin column. The question I put to myself was, at this time, shall I become an acrobat? If cricket had not presented rival attractions, I should probably have said yes, and there was no one who would have said no. I was an earnest juvenile cricketer—so

earnest that I played at daybreak to suit the convenience of youths whose days were claimed by occupations in the City. I cannot honestly recommend cricket at daybreak. The grass is wet with the dew, the ball requires to be dried with sawdust before each delivery, and the running is slippery. That was my experience. I played, young as I was, in some of the best grounds in the north of London, now built upon, and in the ground of Copenhagen House, at Islington, where the New Cattle Market now stands. This was then one of the fashionable headquarters of cricket, and quite the headquarters, as described by William Hazlitt, for racket-playing. William Hazlitt was not only a great essayist, and a greater dramatic critic, but a wonderful sporting reporter. He wrote the best description of a prizefight ever printed. He was a clumsy, diffident, absent man, who, when he came into a room, put his hat under a chair, and then forgot where he had placed it.

My cricketing made me familiar by sight with the best players of the time. The play was conducted without the present armour, as fast catapult bowling who considerately sent me to Jack Ketch with the Weekly Dispatch, and I acquired considerable proficiency, of a tricky kind, without making a public exhibition of myself. Not being strong enough in the wrist to throw up the ball with one hand I used two, and this added an additional charm to my performances. My play, for my age, was considered so remarkable by experts that one of them made overtures to me to take me round the country. I found out some time afterwards that he was a professed

"skittle-sharp."

The art of legerdemain, or "conjuring," as practised at this time, was largely in the hands of a few men who went from tavern to tavern, with their little bundle of apparatus—cups, balls, cards, dolls, etc. in a capacious dress-coat pocket. What they did was done by pure manipulative skill, with little or no mechanical aid, and certainly no scientific appliances. In the bar-parlours in which they exhibited, if sufficiently encouraged, they were surrounded by their audience, and it was a fair struggle between the hands of the performer and the eyes of the audience. There were no music-halls to shelter and encourage talent of this description; and acrobats, unless they got an engagement or "pitch" at a suburban fair like Camberwell or Stepney, or a town fair like Bartholomew's, or in a Christmas pantomime, were content to attract their audience in the open streets, with a bit of ragged carpet for a platform. Slack-wire dancers, stilt-walkers, jugglers, posturers, equilibrists, and others were al fresco artists, unless they got an occasional appearance at one of the London Tea-gardens, where an open theatre in the summer, with a moderate display of fireworks, and a "long room" in the winter, provided amusement for an age which was not very exacting. About this time a donkey balanced on the top of a ladder stuck

on a man's chin was a highly popular sensational street exhibition, until the donkey and ladder one day fell through a shop-window, and a stop was then put by the police to this so-called "dangerous

performance."

Street education—very useful education, and not to be despised by those who have to live and get their living in London—has to be mixed with a little book learning. Boys must "go to school"—it is conventional and respectable—and must learn, or pretend to learn, many things that are not remarkable for utility, and very few things that are. How to preserve their health amidst the many temptations of youth; the nature and effect of accommodation bills; the art of crossing the roadway from one side to the other at the Mansion House in the middle of the day in 1894; these are things that are left amongst the Eleusinian mysteries. They are not showy enough to suit the teacher.

The first school of any importance that I made the acquaintance of was a so-called "Pestalozzian Academy," that was carried on, I should imagine,

ment. The advanced pupils were always either reciting something of a dramatic character, looking at dissolving views, or showing the effect of nitrous oxide, or "laughing gas," on the human system. At various times I imbibed enough of this sickly gas to inflate the great Nassau balloon. The only teacher at the school who remains in my memory was a tall, military, much be-scarred Polish refugee, named Major Beniowski, who taught a system called "Artificial Memory." My memory was always naturally good, even without the Major's "system"; and I always had an infinite power of "cramming" if I thought proper to exercise it. No doubt in any parrot-like examination I could have answered any amount of questions glibly, snapped a degree or an official appointment, and left the room a little more ignorant than when I entered it. I was a favourite pupil of Major Beniowski's because of my showy memory, and I have no doubt that I was pointed out as a shining example of his "system."

The rage for "change of air," and the necessity of "going out of town," did not exist in my youthful days, or if it did, it was a desire not easily gratified by the lower middle-class to which I unworthily belonged. We were not separated by so very many years from the time when Islington—to say nothing of Sadler's Wells, was a fashionable Spa or Spaw, to which Lady Mary Wortley Montagu flew for relief to "take the waters" when she suffered in Mayfair from an attack of the "megrims." Every place which possessed a spring, and few places were without one, was called a Spa. Hampstead on the north side was a Spa, and Beulah, at Norwood, on the south side, was another. Hampstead had its donkeys. which were tolerated up to a very few years ago, and Beulah, until they were driven out by the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, had its gipsies, Margate.

which was fed, to a certain extent, by the sailing boats called "Hoys," immortalised by Charles Lamb. was a Spa, relying more upon its waters than upon sea-bathing, which had not long come into fashion. Its best houses were built with their backs to the sea, and their faces turned towards the "Assembly Rooms," and the newspapers recommended lodgings that were thoroughly protected from the sea-air. Brighton was a Spa, reached by stage-coach, travelling carriages, sturdy pedestrians, and swells who used "dandy-horses," the great-grandfather of the present bicycle. Blackwall, reached by a noisy endless roperailway, was a fashionable resort, with one or two good hotels, and famous for Whitebait dinners, or tea and shrimps, according to your taste and paying capability. Here the annual ministerial dinner was held for some years, before Blackwall was swallowed up by mercantile shipping, and Greenwich took over its convivial business. Once a year Greenwich ran riot with a general fair that did more than imitate the glories of old "Bartlemy." It was a never-to-beforgotten orgie of noise swings dancing-booths oil-

CHAPTER III.

Gravesend—Peckham Rye—Simple pleasures—"Tea and shrimps"—
Mud, dung and riot—"Bartlemy Fair"— The shadow of the
gallows—"Whithread's"—Humanity—"Penny gaffs"—"Patent
theatres"—Early penny paper—A "police raid"—Illegal Shakespeare—Shoreditch—A wholesale arrest—Tea gardens—Saloon
theatres—Hoxton—"The Grecian"—"Bravo, Rouse!"—Robson
—Sims Reeves—A refined music-hall—A People's Opera—An
unholy alliance.

FARTHER down the river was a fashionable freshwater, or rather brackish, watering-place, with gardens, promenades, baths, and bathing machines, called Gravesend, a very different place from the city of the dead which still retains the old Church, the "Town" and "Terrace" Piers, and the name, but has lost for ever the life and spirit. In those days "Tilbury Fort" was a monument, and the memory of Oueen Elizabeth and the Spanish Armada did not smell quite so musty, or suggest quite so much the British Museum. Here, the supply of shrimps was only equalled by the demand, and willing boatmen could be found who, for a substantial consideration. would row a family party, with their luggage, up The simple-minded people, who had to London. never been corrupted by "excursion trains," and too much education, and were contented with Gravesend as a watering-place, were equally contented with Peckham Rye as an overland holiday resort. and shrimps were the ruling "refreshment" here as elsewhere, but the shrimps, it is almost needless

to say, had not the freshness of Gravesend. There was no Windmill Hill, no Camera Obscura, no "Spring-Head" garden of watercresses and strawberries, where, for a moderate payment at the gate, you could gorge yourself into an attack of English cholera. Still, Peckham had one charm—it was very accessible and very rural. London had been kept at a respectful distance, but the distance was not too great to destroy the pleasure of a stroll home through the flower-beds and under the trees, in the cool of a summer's evening.

These easily obtained rural delights contrasted strongly with that annual festival of mud, dung, and riot, known as "Bartlemy Fair." This was the oddest combination of town and country ever brought together. Held every year in the autumn at Smithfield it combined the bustle, business, and attractions of a cattle-market with a congress of peripatetic showmen—the wandering Barnums of the Thirties—all struggling with might and main to get and keep a footing, and all wrestling for a living. Bulls that were occasionally mad, half-tortured sheep, dogs, drovers,

in a few minutes rolled out again down the steps and out of sight into the arms of another gaping pothouse. "Whitbread's" was not far off, and distilleries hovered round the ancient church and close of St. Bartholomew. A big hospital (now standing) was on the ground for the relief of "bloody noses," "cracked crowns," and more serious accidents. Artists and caricaturists painted the Hogarthian humours or agonies of the Fair—they could hardly exaggerate them. History followed in the wake of the artists, and public writers, with some sense of decency, wondered why the Fair was ever born, and how long it would be allowed to encumber the earth and degrade a city of wholesome traditions.

With these manners and habits prevailing, it is not wonderful that humanity was at a discount at the period, and that such things as care and consideration for animals were treated as the outcome of milk-andwater sentimentality. When "Martin's Act" was passed, and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty was started, the humourists were moved to publish verse which mildly ridiculed, without altogether discouraging the new movement. A comic song of the period had a reputation for a time—a short time—that threw the greatest efforts of the greatest wits

in the shade:-

"If I had a donkey, what wouldn't go,
D'ye think I'd wallop him? no, no, no!
I'd give him some hay, and cry, gee, whoa!
And come up, Neddy."

Such a sublime effort as this could not altogether fail in influencing public opinion in the thirties and forties; but, as time rolled on, the humanitarians got into more favour, and when the "Home for Lost and Starving Dogs" was started by the late Lady Talfourd early in the sixties, I was allowed to write in its

favour, first of all in the Morning Post, and afterwards in Good Words. My few opponents said, "If dogs, why not cats?" To which I answered (with prophetic instinct) "Why not cats?" We have now an institution for the relief of suffering cats, and we have Clubs where Insolvent Debtors are received with moderate but sufficient welcome.

The cheap amusements of the period were not confined to fairs, but took the form of small, common, unlicensed theatres, called and known as "Penny Gaffs." It is easy to turn up one's superior nose at these places and to pity the ignorant, degraded people who could be satisfied with such dramatic pabulum, but the blame, if any, for the encouragement of such places rested with the upholders of the Patent Theatre Monopoly. Under this monopoly Covent Garden and Drury Lane held the sole right of performing the so-called "legitimate drama," with the power of prosecuting up to fine and imprisonment any invaders of this sacred privilege. The possession of this power seemed only to encourage a dog-in-the-manger policy

were acted which would not now be tolerated in a second-class theatre of a fourth-rate town, and a salmagundi of rubbish, bombast, and blue-fire like the "Castle Spectre," was not only produced, but wor-

shipped as a monument of literary ability.

My pocket-money being very limited, it is not wonderful that, with my gipsy tastes and perfect liberty of action, I became a patron of "penny gaffs" wherever I could find them. A nomadic, muchhunted showman named Saunders-or "Old Saunders," as we used to call him—took a booth-theatre about, much as a Punch-and-Judy man may take a Punch-and-Judy show, and pitched it on any ground that he saw and fancied which happened to be vacant. This course of action naturally provoked constant conflicts with the police, and old Saunders lived a life of moving-on under pain of being deprived of his liberty. His dramas were models of brevity, and he could play "The Bleeding Nun" and "The Miller and his Men" in five minutes less time than the great * Richardson" took to represent the same works of genius. In those days, in the New Cut, Lambeth -so called, like the New River, because it is very ancient—there was a "gaff" kept by two maiden ladies of most respectable appearance, who might have been anybody's aunts, who passed their time chiefly in taking money and checks and knitting stockings. One cold day, in a very cold winter, they gave me a pair of these stockings, and I took them. I was never a proud boy. Another friend of mine was Mrs. Harwood, a stout, benevolent lady, who used to keep a "gaff" at Shoreditch, "in the Ditch." She used to pass me in. I was very young, and did not take up much room. One eventful night the inevitable "raid" came. There were no halfpenny evening newspapers then, so very little public fuss was made of it; but the late Mr. Edward Lloyd, who

had his printing office close by, and published many cheap journals, amongst the rest Lloyd's Penny Sunday Times and People's Police Gazette, had a full account of the proceedings. He was my first editor, and admitted a descriptive article I wrote a few years afterwards in his Lloyd's Entertaining Journal, called "Saturday Night in London"-London, to my mind then, meaning Shoreditch. The "raid" meant busi-The "gaff" was committing the awful crime of performing Shakespeare without a licence. Dogfights, rat-fights, badger-drawing, skittle-sharping, even "shove-halfpenny" (a game I introduced about fourteen years ago at Ober-Ammergau, when it was too wet to perform the Passion Play), were more or less winked at; but Shakespeare-Shakespeare without a licence-Shakespeare in defiance of the patent houses, Drury Lane and Covent Garden - horrible! degrading! Everybody was very properly taken into custody. The actors in their paint, the fiddlers with their instruments of torture, the audience in their rags, the servants, the proprietor - some eighty people in all-were marched off to Worship Street - all

were let off with a small fine and a severe warning in the morning. They remembered *Othello*, the piece they had been playing, but had no grudge against

Shakespeare. This showed their liberality.

In addition to fairs and "penny gaffs," there was something in existence for humble folks that was very much like the popular—abnormally popular—modern music-hall. The origin of the music-hall and the "theatre of variety" was the old tea-garden, which generally provided something more alcoholic than tea, and "amusements" that satisfied the simple tastes of the last century and the beginning of this. These places stood in the town, or on the very borders of the town, and varied in size, elegance, and importance. In their highest stage of development they formed a Vauxhall or a Ranelagh; in their more humble condition they formed a White Conduit at Islington or a Red Cow at Dalston. A bowlinggreen, a quoit-ground, a "good dry skittle-alley provided recreation for the day in those times of leisure, while acrobatic feats, comic and sentimental singing, and, occasionally, a mutilated farce taken from one of the patent theatres, and played on a platform erected at the end of the "long room" of the presiding tavern, led up to a little burst of fireworks in the adjoining gardens at an hour that did not disturb the early-to-bed citizens. Those were days in which late hours were only kept up by the most determined roysterers, simply because stay-at-homes had very little light to cheer them, and wanderers were glad to get to roost for fear of footpads.

In the fulness of time the "long room" of the tavern became a concert-hall with a stage provided with scenery, and took what at that time was considered the imposing name of "Saloon." The Bower, on the South side of London; the Yorkshire Stingo at the West, in the New Road; the Globe at Mile

End, and the Effingham in Whitechapel, in the East; the Albert in Shepherdess Walk, the Britannia across the fields at Hoxton, and the Grecian in the City Road supplied the North with amusement. In the Twenties and Thirties these "saloon theatres" flourished exceedingly, especially in the Thirties; and it was not until the Forties, when, in 1843, the Theatres Act, technically known as the 6th and 7th Vict. cap. 68, was passed, that an enforced change came over these places. Up to this time they had been licensed and regulated by the Middlesex or Surrey magistrates, and were worked under the same conditions as the music-halls of to-day, with one important difference. They played "stage-plays" with a legal sanction, if they kept clear of Shakespeare and the rights of the patent theatres; while the music-halls of to-day, with half a dozen exceptions, are living upon mutilated dramas and farces, and breaking, not only the Copyright Acts, but the Act under which they are licensed. This is the old 25th Geo. II. cap. 36-an Act passed to regulate

Mme. Vestris, at the Olympic Theatre, was earning a reputation for certain stage reforms—the abolition of drawing-room scenes copied from the booths at Bartlemy Fair, and the introduction of furniture that might have been used at St. James's—Mr. John Rouse was wise enough to follow her example, although his "saloon theatre" only catered for the middle and lower-middle classes. His programme was essentially musical, comprising opera and ballet, and the Grecian, in the slang of to-day, would have been called the

Bijou Opera House."

The records of the Grecian Saloon have a certain value, as they show that fifty years ago, in spite of the baneful influence of the Patent Theatre monopoly, the dramatic amusements of the so-called "people" were quite as advanced as they are at the present moment. Take any music-hall programme of the present day, and compare it with the sixpenny entertainment provided in the City Road by a more or less inspired licensed victualler. In 1834 the company consisted of Miss Tunstall—next to Mrs. Waylett, the most charming ballad-singer of her time—a comic singer and actor named Howell, with the voice of Adam Leffler and the humour of John Reeve; Miss Smith, who afterwards became the well-known Mrs. Raymond of the Strand Theatre; Mr. and Mrs. Caulfield, who migrated eventually to the Haymarket Theatre; Mr. N. Sporle, a singer and composer of some note; Mr. Harry Boleno, a pantomimist of repute, who was afterwards for many years at Drury Lane Theatre; M. Deulin, a dancer of exceptional ability; Mr. Flexmore, who was considered good enough to take M. Petipa's place at Her Majesty's Theatre; M. Milano, a celebrated dancer and ballet-master; the Leclercq family, consisting of the father, with Miss Carlotta Leclercq, Miss Louis Leclercq, and Mr. Charles Leclercq; Miss Lane and Miss Thérèse Cushnie, two of the

best ballet-dancers of their time; Mr. Fraser, a tenor of position, who had played principal parts in opera at Covent Garden; Miss Harriet Coveney, who only died the other day, after helping to make the success of Dorothy; Miss Forde and Miss Pearson (both from Drury Lane); Miss Young, the mother of the celebrated Mrs. Honey; Miss Crisp, Miss Annette Mears, Mr. Baldwin (an excellent basso); Charles Horn, the composer, and many others. Above and beyond these was that meteoric actor, Frederic Robson, in many respects the most remarkable theatrical product of the present century. His great career at the Olympic is well-known matter of theatrical history; but it is not so well known that nearly all his great farce parts (with songs) were performed at the Grecian before he asked the opinion of a central West End audience. He joined the Grecian company in 1839, and opened in the character of John Lump, in the farce of the Wags of Windsor. He came to the Grecian from the Standard Theatre at Shoreditch. In this year Mr. Sims Reeves made his appearance in the City Road, under

None, Rossini's Barber of Seville, La Gassa Ladra, Adolphe Adams' Brasseur de Preston, Giralda, the Postillon de Longjumeau, Boieldieu's La Dame Blanche, the Chaperon Rouge, Ne touches pas d la Reine; Donizetti's Elixir of Love, Daughter of the Regiment, Don Pasquale, Balfe's Bohcmian Girl, John Barnett's Mountain Syiph (produced under the direction of the composer), Auber's Lac des Fées, Weber's Der Freischüts, Abon Hassan, &c. These operas, of course, were not produced with any brilliant accessories; but they were well played by a small, capable, and conscientious company, many of them entitled to rank as "stars." The theatre was a music-hall pure and simple; and the audience, from 1834 to 1845, was a music-hall audience.

The prices were as low as sixpence, and never higher than one shilling or two shillings. The seats had ledges in front of them to hold "refreshments." These refreshments sometimes took the form of beer, sometimes of ardent spirits (though not often), penny buns, sandwiches, and sometimes a little hot nine-O'clock supper, brought to the outer gate by a humble and faithful domestic. Smoking was allowed everywhere. It was a "people's" opera-house, and transformed the City Road, for the time being, into a little unsophisticated German town, with its beer-garden, Palm-garden, and cheap and good music. building, or most of it, now exists, but only as a chief depot of the "Salvation Army." It was the father and mother, the dry and wet nurse of the music-hall of 1893.

The dreaded phantom of the competing "Theatre of Varieties" may have been seen in the Eagle Tavern, City Road, but it may also have been seen elsewhere, and music was the chief syren that lured the public from the drama. Opera and Port-wine Negus made what many considered an unholy alliance

at Bagnigge Wells, at Pentonville, on the borders of the Fleet Valley, and at the Rotunda in the Blackriars Road, just over the bridge, on the way to the ust tolerated Surrey Theatre. This unholy alliance, t is needless to say, was denounced in no measured terms in those protective times by those who constituted themselves the champions of the playhouses.

CHAPTER IV.

The Albert Saloon—The Britannia Saloon—Forgotten actors—Licensing peculiarities—What is music?—The bad old times—Prolific authors—Legislative wisdom—Ignorant taxation—Comic Newgates—Whitecross Street—Fraudulent debtors or fraudulent creditors?

NEAR the Grecian, in the same street, or rather rustic lane, was the Albert Saloon in Britannia Fields —a garden theatre, or theatre in a garden. This was not very substantially built as far as its outer walls were concerned, the survey of public buildings not being very strict in the Thirties. In the intervals of cricket we (the boys of the period) had bored holes at the stage end of the structure with our stumps, and through these holes we could sniff the scent of the footlights—that indescribable bouquet of stale gas, orange-peel, damp play-bills, and mouldy scenery, which suggests a play-house and nothing else. More than this, we could hear the words of the play, the clash of swords, and the shrieks of heroines in distress. We knew the actors, for they occasionally honoured us with their presence at our cricket-playing, and spoke to us with what we considered the most gratifying condescension. There was Paul Herring, a pantomimist and clown, whose reputation is still fondly preserved in old theatrical circles; and Edward Edwards, one of the best melodramatic actors of the Thirties and Forties, who appeared in adaptations of all the old Porte St. Martin dramas— The Tower of Nesle amongst the rest—and was one of the earliest and best representatives of Triboulet in Victor Hugo's Le Roi s'Amuse, called in English The King's Fool—the story of the opera of Rigoletto.

Equally dramatic in its form of entertainment was (and is) the still existing theatre at Hoxton, called This theatre (I will speak of it in the the Britannia. present tense) was always familiarly known as the Brit, and for more than half a century has always held an almost unique position amongst the multitude of London theatres. It is essentially a local house. It is self-supporting and self-supported. It draws none of its attraction and none of its audience from the western districts. Its audience, its actors, and its pieces are more or less of native growth, and more or less fixed and immovable. Temporary engagements are sometimes made for its annual pantomimes, but, as a rule, the Britannia company never leaves the Britannia, but lives and moves and has its being in a constant round of dramas that are manufactured on the premises.

The Britannia in its earliest days may have been a "tea-garden" like the Rosemary Branch at Islington.

practising-ground, the cinder-heaps at King's Cross, who afterwards made himself a name at the Old Adelphi, and other "talent" that either died where it was born, or sought a better market. At this time the celebrated comedian Burton was playing at the Pavilion in Whitechapel for a few shillings a week, before he went to America to found a theatre and a fortune.

For some reason or other the Britannia Theatre, at this period, passed through a short stage of depression. It lost its music licence—a licence which in those days covered the lighter forms of drama-but still it opened its doors and continued practically the same form of entertainment to the accompaniment of a piano. In the year of Our Lord 1837, or thereabouts, the piano was a singular instrument. At Hoxton it was music without being legally music; at the English Opera House in the Strand—now called the Lyceum —it was sufficient music, when played on the stage, to turn Shakespeare's Macbeth into a burletta, and so escape the penalty hanging over it at that theatre by Act of Parliament. As I lately told a Committee of the House of Commons, if our good friend Mr. Henry Irving had lived in those days, and done at the Lyceum what he is doing now, he would have failed, like Mr. Macready, to get a personal permit, and would probably have been condemned to six months' imprisonment with hard labour. We free-traders have certainly done something for the drama.

The Britannia in its "concert" days was principally kept going by a singer of remarkable power, named William Pearce, and several singing-comedians of great and peculiar merit, until the proprietor—the late Mr. S. Lane—regaining his licence, resolved to build a larger and more dramatic theatre. This theatre, which partly absorbed the garden, was duly opened under the management of the late Mr. Dibdin

Pitt—a more prolific dramatist than Lopez de Vega. This gentleman supplied the Britannia with a constant series of dramas, written with the avowed purpose of filling the first place in the bill for a week, or at most a fortnight, and then taking the second place in the bill for another week or fortnight. The theatre was so constructed that, to get to the stage boxes, you had to go on the stage and ascend a ladder at the side amongst the ropes, at the imminent risk of ringing the curtain bell and bringing down the curtain. I incurred this risk one night, and disarranged the performance for a moment. The same thing exists at several Parisian theatres, and notably at the Grand Opera in Paris.

This particular Britannia was either pulled down or burnt down—I forget which—and a larger and more playhouse-looking building which covered the garden was erected in its place. By this time the present respected proprietress of the present theatre—the Miss Wilton of the former house—had become Mrs. Lane, and the direction improved accordingly. Mr. Lane took to wachting and Mrs. Lane to theatrical

force, and was rarely ever moved to beneficial legislative action without the wasteful agency of a riot; which thought the light of Heaven was a fit subject. for taxation and put an impost on bond fide windows, as it had already done upon bond fide nutmegs; which fattened, or tried to fatten, on a tariff of a thousand articles, and only wanted a little more courage to revive the poll-tax; which bled the unfortunate citizen from his cradle to his grave, and bled him with the greatest possible annoyance to himself and the least possible profit to the State this was the governing wisdom of my youth which held fast to that sheet anchor of wholesome restriction—that blessed protection for fraudulent creditors -a tribe far more numerous and pernicious than the fraudulent debtors—the supposed punishment of imprisonment for debt. This was originally intended to be a very severe penal regulation, and, no doubt, during the many years that it was strenuously upheld, it worked a good deal of misery and injustice; but the happy-go-lucky debtors that it created by degrees turned its gloomy prisons into tap-rooms and playgrounds, and gave a farcical reading to what were meant to be really tragic enactments. I had no acquaintance with the Marshalsea, but I remember those comic Newgates—the Fleet, the King's (and Queen's) Bench, and Whitecross Street. The first two I merely saw when I went with my father to visit friends; the latter I saw much of when I went to visit my father, who was one of the farcical prisoners. The door-keeper, in my case, was never very particular about the rules, as I believe I was a pleasant and agreeable boy.

My father had the luck to be on the "City side," as he was arrested within the Corporation precincts. The City side had a better prison allowance than the Middlesex side. The King's Bench was, of course,

reserved for Surrey-side comic debtors. Whitecross Street (by which I mean the prison, not the street associated with Alleyne, Shakespeare's friend, author, actor, manager, and bull-baiter, and founder of "God's Gift" at Dulwich) had a strong and assertive smell, made up of stale beer, rum, tobacco, sawdust, and the grilling of chops and steaks. It may be to this place that the schoolboy's macaronic verses were meant to apply:—

"Tityre tu Patulops, Sub tegmine Fatchops!"

I fed upon the smell of those chops, and occasionally on their substance. When I was allowed to share my father's dinner, I never knew whether I was feeding at the expense of the city, the county, the country, the parish, or my "family." I am bound to say I never inquired. It was food, and I ate it.

Whitecross Street, like the London streets, was one of my schools. I learnt draughts and the rudiments of chess within those convivial, but, of course, penal walls. I become a good player at draughts and walls.

impecunious state in Europe. The old Insolvent Debtors' Court was not an impressive building; it was built long before debt was publicly glorified by the erection of the Bankruptcy Palace and Park, next to the great Law Cathedral in the Strand, and within sight of the "Demon Turkey," which has replaced old Temple Bar, and marks the beginning of Fleet Street.

CHAPTER V.

Dr. Williams's library—Old prints—The Alington estate—Mobbs, the claimant—The Sturts—"The Children of Gibeon"—The longest unbroken street in London—Burke and Hare—St. John's Wood—Charles Lamb's library—No. 20 Alpha Road—Traces of Coleridge—Wordsworth and John Keats—William Godwin—Tom Hood—Miss Kelly—Mary Lamb and her snuff-box—The Duke of Fife—An acrostic and letter of Charles Lamb's—Preacher tasting—W. J. Fox—Philosophical Liberals—Tinder-boxes—A pretty toy—Guy Faux matches.

ALL things come to an end sooner or later, and so did my father's lodging (he lodged, more or less, at the public expense) in that Temple of Legislative Wisdom, Whitecross Street. It is now a goods station of the Midland Railway, and has sucked up Dr. Williams's Theological Library. In due time I gave that Library my patronage, as I had patronised the prison. My father came home with a number of things upon his back, which a prisoner was bound to

When my father arrived home, after his enforced absence of two or three months, in a winter before frost and snow had become unfashionable, when canals and occasionally the Thames were frozen over, and house-water had to be fetched from improvised street pumps by active useful domestic boys, like myself, he found the neighbourhood of Hoxton, on the Sturt estate, in a state of boiling excitement. We lived close to the street called "Ivy Lane," in which, fifty years afterwards, Mr. Walter Besant laid the scene of his great social-reform novel, "The Children of Gibeon." "Scott of Hoxton," the father of Mr. Clement Scott, was the curate of St. John's, the parish church (several years afterwards he became a distinguished Saturday Reviewer); the Reverend Mr. Rose had not then joined the Roman Catholic Church, and become "Mr. Arthur Sketchley"; and Mr. William Moy Thomas had not then become an Hoxtonian, and begun a friendship with me that has lasted more than half a century. This boiling excitement was caused by a formidable and organised claim to the Sturt estate—an enormous landed property which was gradually losing its rural character and acquiring a certain building value. The claimants to this property were a family named Mobbs, and "notices" had been served upon a large group of tenants advising them to pay no more rent to the Sturt agent, and undertaking to hold them harmless. Some of the tenants sided with Mobbs; some, more timid, consulted the agent—a Mr. Bristowe, long since dead, who lived in a country lane, then called "Grange Walk." He was a tall gentlemanly man, with a judicial manner, and his speech was grateful and comforting to poor people, who had very little money and less knowledge of the law of property. The Mobbs' claims, whatever they were based upon, were supposted by an immense number of persons who did

not hesitate to back their opinions and "demonstrate" almost to the verge of riots. A large market or nursery gardener, named Matthews, was prevailed upon to stand his ground, and to be seized upon and sold up in defence of the claimant, and in defiance of the existing landlord. The claim was, of course, taken into the law-courts, where it was argued and counter-argued for many years, and no doubt bonds and obligations were issued, as in the Tichborne case, to provide the necessary refreshers for the lawyers.

The Sturt family were raised to the peerage in the person of the present Lord Alington, and they made good their legal title to the property. They have estates in Dorsetshire, but the Hoxton property is their most extensive and profitable possession, although it lies in a part of London very little known and less understood and appreciated. The houses built upon the market-gardens and fields are not palatial, but they are profitable, and one long narrow street of small six-roomed houses, called Nicholas Street, in the New North Road, has the distinction of

My knowledge of London at this time—east, west, north, and south—was acquired by daily walks, not to say wanderings, which often covered twenty miles a day. My favourite amusement was to try and lose myself, but I never succeeded. I went about with perfect impunity at all hours, and in all places, and was never molested. The Italian boy was murdered near the site of the present Columbia Market and Lady Coutts's Model Lodging Houses, and a new name, as in the case of Boycott, was added to the English language. Burke and Hare were the murderers, in the days of body-snatching, and the word burked," to destroy or smother, got into the dictionaries. I was not burked,

My great aunts had settled in a new part of outlying London, called St. John's Wood, and one of them, Miss Sarah James, tried her luck at lodging letting, at the corner of the Grove Road. As her "connexion," through the Lambs, was chiefly of a literary character, her fortunes varied with the success or failure of various magazines, but I never heard that she experienced any serious trouble, except in the case of Dr. Maginn, and that she may have slightly exaggerated. Another aunt, Mrs. Parsons, who lived at No. 20, Alpha Road, a little lower down, had undertaken the charge of poor Mary Lamb, and had fitted her up a comfortable library sitting-room on the ground floor, with a French window opening into a garden. The garden was almost an orchard—part of the great orchard which probably gave its name to Orchard Street-and this was full of trees that produced the finest apples—now all but extinct—known as "Ribstone Pippins." In my wanderings, especially in the autumn, I found my way to this orchard, which was only one of many in the same road, and after giving a defiant challenge to English cholera, I spent the rest of the afternoon with the dreamy old lady,

who looked over me rather than at me, and seemed to see many visions that were beyond my limited intelligence. Sometimes we played at cards -her favourite pastime-such games as I had any knowledge of, and sometimes when she was tired or liked to roam about the garden, I was allowed to browse upon the books which walled in the apart-Most of them were authors' copies-simply bound in rough paper or boards, with ragged-edged leaves and ample margins. They were fifty years in advance of the modern artistic publisher. Many of the folios were there that had been bought by Charles Lamb in his roamings, and brought home and carefully collated with his sister, by the aid of a tallow candle. The old dramatists were, of course, well represented, and the picaresco school of fiction, notably The Rogue; or, the Adventures of Don Guzman D'Alfarache.

The books that I fastened upon most were William Hazlitt's works, many of them full of notes by authors who confirmed or disputed the great critic's statements. Coleridge fell foul of Wordsworth, or Words-

"M. L.," which almost every man and woman of the period of any importance had dipped into; and then started off for my four-mile walk to Hoxton. snuff-box eventually came into my possession, and I gave it to the Duke of Fife as a present on his marriage. The numerous letters from Charles Lamb and his friends, which my aunt, Miss Sarah James, possessed, she, unfortunately, destroyed on a mistaken question of principle, and the only papers of the slightest interest are the following acrostic and letter. The acrostic, in the early part of the century, was a favourite form of composition. It was the age of "keepsakes"—the day of album literature. Lamb, judging from published specimens, was rather fond of this somewhat laboured form of verse-writing. The acrostic is addressed to "Sarah James of Beguildy," whose father was rector of that small Salopian parish:-

ACROSTIC.

S leep hath treasures worth retracing, A re you not in slumbers pacing R ound your native spot at times, A nd seem to hear Beguildy's chimes? H old the airy vision fast;

J oy is but a dream at last:
A nd what was so fugitive,
M emory only makes to live.
E ven from troubles past we borrow
S ome thoughts that may lighten sorrow,

O nwards as we pace through life, F ainting under care or strife,

By the magic of a thought
E very object back is brought
G ayer than it was when real,
U nder influence ideal.
I a remembrance as a glass,
L et your happy childhood pass;
D reaming so in fancy's spells,
Y ou still shall hear those old church bells.

CHARLES LAMB.

The letter is addressed to the same lady, written on something we should now call sugar-paper, and before the invention of envelopes:—

Enfield, 16th April, 1831.

We have just received your letter. I think Mother Reynolds will go on quietly, Mrs. Scrimpshaw having kitten'd.

The name of the late Laureate was Henry James Pye, and when his ist Birthday Ode came out, which was very poor, somebody, being asked his opinion of it, said—

> And when the Pye was opened, The birds began to sing, And was not this a dainty dish To set before the king?

Pye was a brother to Old Major Pye, and father to Mrs. Arnold, and uncle to a General Pye, all friends of Miss Kelly. Pye succeeded Thomas Warton, Warton succeeded William Whitehead, Whitehead succeeded Colley Cibber, Cibber succeeded Ensden, Ensden succeeded Thomas Shadwell, Shadwell succeeded Dryden, Dryden succeeded Davenant, Davenant—God knows whom.

There never was a Rogers a Poet Laureate; there is an old living poet of that name, a banker, as you know, author of the "Pleasures of Memory," where Moxon goes to breakfast in a fine house in the Green Park, but he was never Laureate. Southey is the present one, and from anything I know or care, Moxon may succeed him.

anything I know or care, Moxon may succeed him.

We have a copy of Christmas for you, so you may give your own to
Mary as soon as you please. We think you need not have exhibited

land: my father followed this up by taking me about, and tasting various doctrines in various places. day it was Rowland Hill, in a chapel that looked like a circus in the Blackfriars Road, which is now, I believe, transformed into a furniture warehouse. Rowland Hill was the spiritual father of Mr. Spurgeon, and had the same art of making his sermons "amusing," and consequently illegal under the Lord's Day Observance Act of George III. Another Sunday we would try a church, where a powerful preacher, named Dr. Mortimer, delivered popular discourses. A Scotch Church, a Welsh Church, and the Roman Catholic Chapel in Moorfields were visited in the course of our theological travels. To vary our Sunday excitements-I can call them by no better name-we attended various lectures in the old "Hall of Science" in the City Road, the predecessor of Mrs. Besant's Hall of Science in the Old Street Road, where "freethought" orators held forth between their occasional periods of imprisonment for heretical teaching. place we frequented with the greatest regularity was the chapel in South Place, Finsbury, then tenanted by Mr. W. J. Fox, a Unitarian minister. Mr. Fox was an orator with strong Radical feelings and prejudices; a man of real literary ability and power, who had the art of putting his ideas in an epigrammatic form. His discourses were more political than theological, and his morning lecture, or something very like it, was repeated at night in the "National Hall, Holborn, which began as a Dissenting Chapel, and finished as the Royal Music Hall. Mr. W. J. Fox was a short, thick-set, Napoleonic man, with a Beethoven head and plenty of grey hair. His delivery was most effective. He understood antithesis, and used it freely. Mr. Moy Thomas and I used to quarrel over his merits and defects—I being the champion of the reputed author of "Publicola's"

letters in the Weekly Dispatch, and Mr. Moy Thomas (probably for the sake of argument) taking the opposite brief. Though we were both boys, we had strong, decided opinions, my friend's, I am bound to admit, being less impulsive than mine, but a great deal more logical. "Junius," of course, was the literary father of Mr. W. J. Fox, as Mr. Fox was the father of a number of imitators, like Mr. George Dawson. They peppered with a liberal but judicious hand, and their discourses were quite entitled to be called Sunday Ticklers.

Mr. Fox had a large following amongst the literary and artistic men of his time, and amongst those who occasionally "sat under him" were Charles Dickens, just rising into fame, Macready, John Forster, Browning, Hazlitt, Godwin, and a number of others. I and my father went into the small free gallery at the South Place Chapel, as we were not seat-holders. We sat near the organ, as there was a choral service and other forms of Unitarian worship. The principal aim, however, of the lecturer was to popularise the creed of Philosophical Liberalism—the creed of

number one") that he used it twice—once in the Bulwer-Macready play of "Money," and once in the Bulwer novel of "Ernest Maltravers." Political partizanship in these days cannot live long and do much without dragging in Judas Iscariot; and Judas was, of course, a maker of "points" for Mr. W. J. Fox. In one of his lectures he spoke of "the two greatest scoundrels handed down to eternal infamy in the pages of history—Judas Iscariot and the late Lord

Castlereagh."

When the future Macaulay comes to write the history of England, he will probably describe the period of which I am gossipping as the age of Dickens. He might also describe it as the age of The "midnight oil" was a tallow tinder-boxes. candle laboriously lighted with a combination of materials that showed the inventive ingenuity of mankind before science came down from its lofty pedestal, and gave up the duty of attending on the gods, to devote itself to the comfort and improvement of the common people—the multitude swinish or not swinish—the very necessary but vulgar taxpayers. The tinder-box was a work of domestic economy that proved the existence of humour in inert matter. brutal obstinacy of this matter is familiar to every workman, but the humour is not always so apparent. The language of flowers—the songs of vegetables have both had their more or less imaginative recorders, but the trade unionism of nails and hammers -the tendency of stone and iron to go on strike, to use violence when so disposed, and generally to do all they can to arrest the progress of physical development, have not had justice done to them by the philosophical observer.

The tinder-box was the toy of my childhood. Without it there would have been no light or firewith it there was (after a time) light and fire, and a

certain amount of safety. No child could burn down a house or bake itself to a cinder with a tinder-box. First of all, the rags had to be got, and burnt into tinder. This tinder was put into a large round tin box, big enough for a pie-dish. Then a piece of jagged flint had to be got, and a thing called "a steel," which might have been the remains of an old horse-shoe, had to be purchased; the flint, struck edgeway on the steel, sent sparks into the tinder which smouldered and prepared itself for the matches. The matches were a formidable bundle of thin strips of wood, diamond-pointed at the ends and dipped in brimstone. They suggested Guido Fawkes and the cellars of the old Houses of Parliament, and the "Guys" in the streets, carried in chairs by boys who represented a proper Protestant horror of all Roman Catholics. With such matches in your apartments, it was more easy to remember the fifth of November than to forget it, and there was no occasion to go far for the reason of nursing your wrath with the memory of the Gunpowder plot and treason.

CHAPTER VI.

Turnival's Inn—Pickwick — Seymour — Sam Weller and the Surrey
Theatre—Cockney sportsmen—Hornsey Wood—The Sluice House
—The New River—"V's and W's"—The first London railway—
The third-class passenger—Parliamentary trains—St. Martin's-leGrand — The "Bull and Mouth" — Pocket-money — Work — A
"situation"—Penmanship—The use of figures—The railway mania
— George Hudson — Baxter, Rose, and Norton — The Great
Northera — Disraeli — Philip Rose — The Press newspaper —
Propagandist clubs — "Glyn's" — The first Lord Wolverton —
Demented millionaires.

WHILE Charles Dickens, housed in that dull and pretentious stucco Inn known as "Furnivals," was doing work as a literary journeyman, writing up to Seymour's sketches of cockney sportsmen—the sportsmen who shot sparrows in Hornsey Wood, and fished for freshwater sprats at the Sluice House on the New River—the new iron-roads were being gradually and timidly introduced to London. George Hudson had not then quite risen in all his glory, and was still a linendraper at Newcastle-on-Tyne, or in the neighbourhood. Dickens's journey-work produced "Pickwick." Seymour, and his successors after his lamented suicide, rather hampered than inspired the greatest literary photographer since Shakespeare, and he was tempted to go to the Surrey Theatre for the character of "Sam Weller," which he found in the performance of a popular low comedian named Vale, who gave life to a minor playhouse farce called "The Boarding House." Sayings like "We all have our little faults. as the Frenchman said when he boiled his grandmother's head in a pipkin," were seized and inlaid in the Cockney Sportsman novel, and the writer was

tempted to make his readers—the whole world—believe that the common people transposed their V's and W's, producing some such Whitechapel jargon and patois as, "Vell, Villiam Vatts, vat is it?" and "Werry good wittles, I wow!" I may be mistaken—we are all liable to error—but I went about the world with my eyes and ears open, and was a fairly observant boy—as observant, in a way, as the great writer who was afterwards to be my master—and I cannot remember such "patter" being the common or vulgar tongue. The indiscriminate use of the W I admit—it exists at the present day; but the V—except in comic songs at the "free and easies," where it was accepted as the Hall-mark of humour—I must beg respectfully to deny its general use.

The introduction of railways did not inspire much interest as a novelty, for no one knew what they were going to lead to. The mail coaches were still regarded as one of the permanent institutions of the country; the first of May, when the new scarlet liveries for coachmen and guards were served out was regarded as a fête day, and the "Bull and Mouth" in St.

pariah. He travelled, or was bundled in an open cattle-box without seats, exposed to wind, dust, and rain. To get in and out of this box, a side trap-door was let down on to the platform, and down or up this inclined plane he tripped to or from his friends, with the face of a chimney-sweep and the manners of an excavator. Even the philosophical Radicals—the determined foes of State interference—were content to receive a Board-of-Trade Act making Parliamentary trains, penny-a-mile fares, and roofs, doors, and windows, conditions of railway travelling which the companies were bound to provide. All this was very terrible to the abstract politician, but it was received with singular favour by the public, and was absolutely necessary at that period. The railway managers were children learning their work, and their school education, as usual, was of very little use to them.

The necessity of getting a living soon presented itself to my juvenile mind, as it presents itself, I presume, to all of us. It is generally forced upon our notice by a deficiency of pocket-money. We feel that our birth is somehow not quite complete without the sole nexus. My father, about this time, had got an appointment connected with the ancient corporation of the City of London. He had been persuaded to give up his feeble, erratic, amateur attempts to become a merchant, which had landed him amongst the Lotus-eating fraternity of the Common Debtor's Prison, and he submitted, to our utter astonishment, to the official restraint of a clerkship. He became, or was called, with or without justification, the Under-Secretary of the Irish Society—an office which administers the estates in the North of Ireland, stolen, I fancy, from Ireland in the first instance and presented to the Corporation by James the First. These estates are managed, I believe, mostly for the benefit of Ireland, minus the official charges for

administration in England. What these charges are I cannot tell, but my father cannot be accused of robbing Ireland to any great extent. His stipend was the ordinary clerical pay; he had very little to do with the banquets of the "Society," and he kept the records in a style of penmanship that was taught in the early part of the century, when people had more time to cultivate the ornamental in business.

At the same time that it occurred to me to do something to increase my pocket-money, I became conscious of the fact that my penmanship, far from being like my father's, was a disgrace to the family. The Pestalozzian system had done very little for me in this purely mechanical art, and that little I had not improved upon by almost living in a cricket-field. I could run round London without stopping—and while I ran I read; but when it came to penmanship I was very clumsy-fisted. I had a talent for forgery—latent, I am happy to say—and when I took a nondescript "situation," in a soft goods warehouse in Laurence Lane, Cheapside, close to Bishop Tillotson's Church,

become a company promoter and a champion auditor

in the modern acceptation of the terms.

My first taste of city life did not include the luxury of "early closing" and the Saturday half-holiday. The hours were long, certainly a full twelve hours from nine in the morning till nine at night. The big houses—the Cooks, the Pawsons, the Morrisons, and the Leafs—often worked later—worked, in fact, till the "orders" were made up and packed, while the counting-house historians—the recording angels of commerce—if not actively employed, were being kept in attendance. All letters had to b' folded, as envelopes had not then been invented, and the scene at the General Post Office in St. Martin's-le-Grand, on the stroke of six, when the country mail had to be posted, was one of the sights of London.

The railway mania, as it was called, was just beginning to show itself, and the reign, powerful, if short, of the inspired linendraper, the railway king-Mr. George Hudson—was at hand. The warning of the "South Sea Bubble"—the scheme of the swindler Law in the last century—was conveniently forgotten. and the proof that rampant imagination still ruled the dingy counting-houses of the City was soon apparent to the meanest capacity. The West End, as usual, was led by the City; in some cases it led the City, and so it was in the days of the railway mania. have mentioned the adventurer Law, but I do not want to degrade George Hudson by putting him on the same platform. Whatever may have been George Hudson's faults—and he certainly had many—it must never be forgotten that he left solid monuments of utility behind him. He developed the iron-roads only too rapidly, which was a benefit and not an injury to the country at large; he built the high-level bridge at Newcastle, the father of the Brooklyn bridge at New York. In more cases than one he surrendered

profits to public clamour, which he might have re tained by moral right and legal force; he played the "society fool" for the time, but he was encouraged to do so by the great Duke of Wellington, and men and women of his class. No one can say that he used his great power over the too redundant imagination of his followers for his own personal enrichment, and when the "crash," as it is called, came, he was in the proud position, like Richard Cobden, of having to be supported by voluntary contributions. He retired to Calais—the sad home of deposed monarchs—as Beau Brummel, the king of the cravat, had retired before him, and here I was introduced to him by Mr. J. S. Forbes, about twelve years ago, on the occasion of the trial trip of the Bessemer steamer.

The two greatest promoters of railway enterprise were the great bank of Glyn, Halifax, Mills and Co., in Lombard Street, and the great legal firm of Baxter, Rose and Norton (afterwards Baxter, Rose, Norton and Spofforth), of Park Street, Westminster. It is not too much to say that if these firms (and others which followed) had not thrown themselves into the

the firm. Sir Philip Rose had been a life-long friend of Lord Beaconsfield, who gave him his baronetcy and the political secretaryship of the Carlton Club. Sir Philip was Mr. Benjamin Disraeli's adviser in his struggling days when he was running the *Press* newspaper at a loss, and had to provide money from week to week to pay paper-makers, printers, the editor, Mr. Samuel Lucas, of the *Times*, and the contributors. I was one of the occasional contributors,

my communications being mostly in verse.

Mr. Benjamin Disraeli was born in the Upper Street, Islington, where his father, Isaac Disraeli, lived a few years before the family came down to the large house at the corner of Hart Street and Bloomsbury Square, which at that time was a residence fit, in every way, for a man of property. Before the Disraelis lest Islington, Master Benjamin was sent to a Dame School in Colebrooke Row, Islington, opposite the New River, and not far from Charles Lamb's Cottage, kept by the Misses Salmon and Tucker. Another boy, about the same age, at the school, was Master Philip Rose, and the two children, who were afterwards to be so closely connected in public and private affairs, learnt their simple alphabet together. When Sir Philip Rose left his old firm, chiefly on the Tichborne question, he joined the banking firm of Emile Erlanger & Co., in Lothbury, as their paid legal adviser. It was understood, at the time, that he received the honorarium of a Prime Minister, but the position was looked upon in the City as somewhat of a trading mystery.

Mr. Spefforth, the other leading partner in the firm of Baxter & Co., was an energetic parliamentary agent of the Conservative party, and is generally credited with the happy idea of strengthening the party by the organisation of social clubs whose ballotboxes are not unduly hostile to those who profess the

right principles. The "Conservative," the "Junior Carlton," the "Constitutional," and the "Junior Constitutional," are solid examples of this wise idea and lessons to the Liberals and Radicals, which they would do well to copy. The undecided young man is caught on the threshold of life, made a member of a comfortable club, and stamped as a Tory, or Conservative, for the remainder of his existence. effect of this was seen in the strange case of Mr W. S. Gilbert, who was taken into the broad bosom of the "Junior Carlton Club," and stamped with the proper stamp. The first-fruits of this were the writing and production of "The Happy Land," which not only drew the attention of the Lord Chamberlain to the singular fact that his jurisdiction did not extend further than twenty yards short of the Court Theatre, but it amused the public for several months, showed the hollowness of the official regulation of the stage, and helped to overthrow a Gladstonian Administration. Since that day the Liberals have not been so fluent in calling the Tories the "stupid party," feeling, perhaps, that after the blackballing of the late Mr.

into Parliament and became the whip of the Liberal party, and one of the most popular whips they ever had. The qualities he had shown in Lombard Street were again useful at Westminster. The figure in the bank, however, which interested me most, was an old gentleman with a thoughtful and yet vacant face, dressed much in the style of the late Lord Redesdale. He wore a beaver hat, pushed to the back of his head, an old-fashioned dress-coat with flap-pockets on the hips, a single-breasted waistcoat without a collar, like a Quaker's, a limp white cravat—all in the fashion of the dawn of the century. He moved between the crowded rows of clerks, opened and closed big ledgers, pointed with a thin finger to long columns of figures, and, at times, seemed to go through the process of casting-up" or verifying totals. No one took any notice of him, and he spoke to nobody. I don't think he was another millionaire Morrison, living in dread of the workhouse and picking up pins and bits of string. I asked no rude questions about him-I seemed to understand his story by instinct. He was another of the phantoms that had been the companions of my childhood.

CHAPTER VII.

The City—Its food—Chop-houses—Clothes—" Reform your tailor's bills"—The Bungalow Bank—Currency—Peel and the Charter—The "dinner-hour"—A meal of books—The blind fiddler—Jullien—Musical criticism—The three Graces—A "record" adaptation of Balzac—A mysterious exhibition—Poor Faber—Rheumatism—Professor Frankenstein—His monster—A brutal world.

THE City in those days was ignorant of the blessed word "restaurant." It knew taverns, but it was innocent as regards bars; it knew potboys, but it had not the temptations of barmaids; it knew "bottle entrances," it knew "cook shops;" it knew eatinghouses, it knew fourpenny plates and sixpenny plates, it knew penny bread, penny potatoes and penny waiters; it knew coffee-houses—not coffee-shops—a few choice and dear establishments, where private dinners could be given with port wine and nuts to

"Bitter Ale," was just being heard of, but it was ranked as a tonic medicine—a mysterious "pick-meup"—and sold as such in an alley off Lower Thames The chop-house floors were carpeted with Street sand, or sawdust, or a mixture of both, and the chop-eaters were seated in wooden boxes, much like a Margate bathing machine, and about as comfortable. Long clay pipes were the fashion, and the spittoon was a recognised article of furniture. Cigarettes and carpets were in the distant future. Alamode beef had been introduced from France, but it was looked upon for a time as a foreign "kickshaw," and to many minds it accounted for the defeat of the French at Waterloo. The Melton Mowbray pork-pie had not been invented. Leg of beef soup was a staple commodity, so were trotters, so was peasepudding, oysters (the best) were sixpence a dozen, and mostly sold at street corners. People, I am afraid, ate peas with their knives, and picked their teeth with their forks. It was not an æsthetic age. The most horrible Georgian furniture was the delight of the wealthy and cultivated minority, and Chippendale masterpieces—the sweepings of old almshouses—were considered good enough for the swinish multitude. The taste for these old-fashioned sterling household gods had not been created, and the Americans had not come over with the almighty dollar to sweep the market. Hackney coachmen still dressed in coats with many capes, like "Couriol" in the "Courier of Lyons," the dress not being adapted from the French, but being really the English production, hailed as the dress of liberty by the chief actors in the Revolution of 1795. The "tall hat" was a beaver hat, sometimes as rough as a Scotch terrier; silk had not been discovered for hats, nor alpaca for umbrellas. Piemen, with cans, openly tossed for pies in public places, and the first revolutionary cheap tailor made his appearance in the person of a Mr. Doudney, of Lombard Street. Unless I am much mistaken, he was the inventor of "sandwich men" or peripatetic posters. A number of gigantic boardmen were sent out with placards advising the public to "Reform their Tailor's Bills." This was twenty years before the birth of the "Registered Paletot" and the "Sixteen Shilling Trousers." Mr. Doudney made a moderate fortune; he did more, he made my first masculine child's suit, and ended his days as a clergyman of the Church of England.

The City had no clubs, except places like the "Baltic," and "business" did not mean arriving from Richmond or Brighton at 11 A.M., opening a few or many letters, spending two hours in a smoking-room or over a billiard-table, and a ride to a West-end club in the afternoon before putting on dress-clothes for dinner and a theatre. The working partners, or heads of departments, lived on the premises, and work began about the time the merchant of to-day is thinking of taking another hour's sleep before he

wobbling manner. Sir Robert Peel had to convert these heretics to currency christianity. It was no easy task. He began his work in 1833 and finished it in 1844 with the Bank Charter Act. He finished his work, but it was left for others, and notably Lord Overstone and the *Times* newspaper, to see that it was observed and respected. The unbounded, unchecked imagination of the City—an imagination which flies far more wildly than that of the mysterious fictionists who created the "Arabian Nights," produced its periodical "panics," and when a panic became acute, a weak-kneed Government was always found ready to listen to the howlings of the mob, and to pledge its credit by suspending the Bank Charter, and sanctioning the issue of reams of worthless paper, — believed in by the ignorant multitude to save the reckless prodigals of commerce from the consequences of their own folly. No greater encouragement of gambling ever existed, and it was supported by men who professed to look with horror on the Turf and Crockford's, and who abolished lotteries by the Act of a make-believe virtuous Parliament.

The relaxations of the city at that time—for it naturally had its relaxations, as human nature is much the same in all ages and all countries—were a few favoured taverns where cards were allowed, and libraries for those desirous of improving their minds. There were Dr. Williams's, in Cripplegate, near Milton's Golden Lane—one of his many residences—and the church where he is buried; the Guildhall Library, and the London Library in Finsbury Circus, then a place like Finsbury Square, full of fashionable residences. Finsbury Square at that time was mostly inhabited by great doctors and merchants. One of these doctors was called in—as a last resource—when my mother was dying in the little room overlooking the

madhouse yard at Hoxton. One of these merchants was Mr. Peek, the great wholesale grocer, whom I went to see about a "situation in the City." He received me very kindly in a big dining-room, or library, and suggested an "apprenticeship," which I foolishly declined. It would have made me a merchant instead of a vagabond, and probably Lord Mayor of London. When I left him, I sneaked into the old Artillery Ground to look at the original volunteers, train-bands, and amateur soldiers, who were the fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers of our present supplementary army, provided for nome consumption. Next door to this place, which remains unaltered, was, and is, the old Moorfields Burial Ground-a burial ground then, and not an rnamental garden. It was one of my play-grounds during my "dinner-hour." My favourite tomb was ohn Bunyan's. Some of the dinner-hours were pent in Dr. Williams's Library, tasting Jeremy Taylor, he "Judicious Hooker," Richard Baxter and others. The Kick in the Breech for Unbelievers," I scarcely

of a book, than not to have seen the book. When I became older, and in course of time had to be a journeyman reviewer, I found that I was not the possessor of a patent in this opinion. In travelling, I held that it was better to have spent an hour in a town, or to have driven through it on a stage-coach outside, than not to have seen the town. This opinion I found no occasion to change when railways were invented.

I am afraid I gave a deal of trouble to the poor under-librarians, who had to mount tall ladders, or go into upper galleries to find the books I selected. I never could grasp the inner meaning of Rabelais, and dining a few years ago with the Rabelaisian Society, I was still trying to grasp it. The late Lord Houghton, Mr. Walter Pollock, Mr. Joseph Knight, Mr. Walter Besant, and others, did their best to enlighten me, but I left off an enthusiastic admirer of old Cotton's vigorous translation, but not much wiser. Frank Burnand called him a "dirty old ruffian," which was wrong; I called him a headstrong allegory, which was a little more polite.

Descartes, whose Cogito ergo Sum I put against Bishop Berkeley's opposite riddles; a little taste of Kant, Hegel, and the German school; a dip into Monboddo, Burnet's "Theory of the Earth," and other similar works of fiction, ended, I am afraid, by creating in me a most improper contempt for all philosophy. I mentally compared many of these writers to dogs, revolving in the vain effort to catch their own tails. I compared their books to the maze at Hampton Court, in which, after infinite labour and mental searchings, you find yourself at last at the point from which you started. When I saw the statues of Descartes and Rabelais (many years afterwards), facing each other on the river at Tours, I could only think of two figures representing tragedy and comedy;

one grinning through one horse-collar, and the other

frowning through another.

The Restoration Comedies fed me for a time, and were a relief to abstract conundrums. D'Urfey and Tom Brown were a real treat, especially the latter. I selected him because he had touched upon my beloved Hoxton. His "Dialogues" were a revelation in slang. He called a spade a spade; and sometimes went a little further and called it an adjective shovel. His "Dialogue," the scene of which is laid in a boat rowing over from Westminster to Lambeth, between a coal-heaver and a Moll Flanders of the period, is probably the most straightforward piece of composition in the English language.

This gipsy reading was not carried on by playing the wag from business, as I always had the reputation of being a model clerk; it was done at night, when the hours of closing permitted it. In the daytime, coming from Glyn's, I wasted a little of my employer's time in Pope's Head Alley, listening to a blind violinist named Cohen, who, accompanied by his son

one of the appreciative listeners. One day we missed him from his accustomed place, and feared he was ill or dead, but found afterwards he had been "commanded" to give a special private concert in St. Swithin's Lane, at the Rothschilds.

About this time we were all well-educated as musical amateurs—thanks to M. Jullien. Jullien, with all his charlatanery, was a broad and liberalminded musical caterer, and one who had thoroughly . realised the power of the almighty shilling. collected an orchestra that has rarely been equalled and never surpassed, filled with the best soloists in the world, and housed in Covent Garden Theatre, with a programme arranged on the most Catholic principles. Jullien knew that there was nothing parochial in the spirit of music; he selected his material from the whole civilised world, and threw it at the feet of the average Englishman for a shilling. The average Englishman appreciated the gift, and supported the liberal Frenchman. Musical cliques opposed him; musical criticism never very fair, or very cosmopolitan, very often called him a mountebank. These were the days when the Weekly Dispatch was a power in the land, and its critic hailed Verdi and Donizetti as a couple more Italian organ-grinders from beyond the mountains. Alderman Harmer, who was destined to be immortalised by Samuel Warren in "Ten Thousand a Year," as Mr. Quirk, of Quirk, Gammon, and Snap, criminal lawyers, was the senior partner in the firm of Harmer, Flower, and Steel, the predecessors of the Lewis's and the Humphries. He bought the Weekly Dispatch and the Gothic castle at Greenhithe, which afterwards became the property of Mr. Moss, one of the pro-prietors of the *Daily Telegraph*. Alderman Harmer divided with the "Thunderer" of the *Times*, and Fonblanque of the Examiner, the journalistic

authority of London. Alderman Harmer did not destroy Verdi and Donizetti, nor Macready and the Tory party, for the matter of that, but he made Miss

Eliza Cook a poetess.

The one honest musical critic at this time was Henry F. Chorley, nearly the ugliest man in London. George Henry Lewes and Thornton Hunt ran him hard on this point, and together they were known as the "Three Graces." The two latter had peculiar views on the subject of marriage, which they acted upon according to their lights, and the first of the two latter ultimately converted George Eliot to his peculiar way of acting and thinking. He was a many-sided and clever man-rather satisfied with his personal appearance, and as stock author at the Lyceum Theatre, under the management of Charles Mathews and Madame Vestris, he did yeoman's service for his employers. When Balzac's Mercadet was produced in Paris, and there was a rush of the few London managers, who were largely dependent on the French stage for the comedy, Lewes was first in the field. He got the play on a Saturday

to perfection. I was in the front row of the gallerya place that suited my pocket. Was the dialogue slip-shod? No. Take "what are creditors created for but to give credit " as a sample. Charles Mathews played the chief part, and no one, not even the French creator, could have played it better or so well. Was it badly adapted? No. Years afterwards, when I had the Gaiety Theatre, and Mr. Alfred Wigan was my chief actor, the necessity of finding him a good play and part presented itself to my managerial mind. I turned to Mercadet, and Mr. Alfred Wigan turned to . Affable Hawk," the chief character. The next morning when we met we shook our heads. no good. Mr. George-Henry-Lewes-Slingsby-Lawrence had cut the ground from under us with his forty-eight hours' adaptation, his phonographic echo of Balzac.

Mr. Henry F. Chorley had not the cleverness of Lewes, or the political energy of Thornton Hunt (the son of Leigh Hunt), but he had the good qualities of a sterling friend and supporter. When Mr. Dilke, the grandfather of the present baronet—Sir Charles Dilke, M.P.—started the Athenæum, weekly critical paper, and had to fight the Literary Gazette, the publishers, and the Jerdan party and followers, the one man who stood by him with unflinching steadiness and courage was Mr. Henry F. Chorley. They were both comparatively poor men at the time, but money, in this case, was not the sole nexus.

Jullien has long been dead, and most of those who supported or opposed him are dead and forgotten. He died, I believe, mad, if not in a madhouse. His widow had to earn her living by taking checks, or money, or both at the theatre where he was once a master. Many men who deserved it less have been effusively honoured with a memorial tablet; and some have even been too much honoured with statues.

The voice of one street-boy and penny-a-liner cannot do much, but it may with the help of God and good feeling produce other voices. If not, no matter. I shall not be the first who has cried in the wilderness.

An exhibition about this time was opened in a lingy room at the Egyptian Hall—long before Albert Smith had made that badly-constructed building popular. It was called "Euphonia," and was miserably neglected, although a short leaderette in the Times said it was the duty of every intelligent Englishman to go and see it, "Euphonia" was a peaking and singing machine, modelled in a Lowther Arcade resemblance of a human form—the modeller, nventor, constructor and exhibitor being a "Professor" Taber.

I was just recovering from an acute attack of heumatic fever. I was seized with illness one night, r rather early one morning, at Vauxhall Gardens, bout twenty years before they were handed over to he speculative, and sometimes, jerry builder. I rawled out of the gardens, and sat down on a curb-

handles, and any projection that I could clutch. The "Children of Gibeon"—not Mr. Walter Besant's, but the fathers and mothers of his children—shook their heads, and gave the bent youth a very short innings. The Children of Gibeon never had the rare

gift of prophecy.

When I got better I struggled into a sixpenny omnibus—all omnibuses in those days were practically sixpence for any distance—and hobbled into the Egyptian Hall. I paid my shilling and was shown into a large room, half filled with boxes and lumber, and badly lighted with lamps. In the centre was a box on a table, looking like a rough piano without legs and having two key-boards. This was surmounted by a half-length weird figure, rather bigger than a full-grown man, with an automaton head and face looking more mysteriously vacant than such faces usually look. Its mouth was large, and opened like the jaws of Gorgibuster in the pantomime, disclosing artificial gums, teeth, and all the organs of speech. There was no lecturer, no lecture, no music none of the usual adjuncts of a show. The exhibitor. Professor Faber, was a sad-faced man, dressed in respectable well-worn clothes that were soiled by contact with tools, wood, and machinery. The room looked like a laboratory and workshop, which it was. The Professor was not too clean, and his hair and beard sadly wanted the attention of a barber. I have no doubt that he slept in the same room as his figure -his scientific Frankenstein monster-and I felt the secret influence of an idea that the two were destined to live and die together. The Professor, with a slight German accent, put his wonderful toy in motion. explained its action: it was not necessary to prove the absence of deception. One keyboard, touched by the Professor, produced words which, slowly and deliberately in a hoarse sepulchral voice came from the mouth of the figure, as if from the depths of a tomb. It wanted little imagination to make the very few visitors believe that the figure contained an imprisoned human—or half human being, bound to speak slowly when tormented by the unseen power outside. No one thought for a moment that they were being fooled by a second edition of the "Invisible Girl" fraud. There were truth, laborious invention, and good faith, in every part of the melancholy room. As a crowning display, the head sang a sepulchral version of "God save the Queen," which suggested inevitably, God save the inventor. This extraordinary effect was achieved by the Professor working two key-boards-one for the words, and one for the music. Never probably, before or since, has the National Anthem been so sung. Sadder and wiser I, and the few visitors, crept slowly from the place, leaving the Professor with his one and only treasure-his child of infinite labour and unmeasurable sorrow. He disappeared quietly from London, and took his marvel to the provinces, where

CHAPTER VIII.

THOUGH I had undoubted stage proclivities, my first appearance was not a very distinguished one, although it was on the classic boards of Covent Garden Theatre. Wandering one night past the stage-door of old Covent Garden Theatre, I found it open and un-The tempting gust of gas came into the guarded. dirty side street. The quiet of the place was soon accounted for; the theatre was in the possession of M. Jullien, but it was not a promenade concert night. The Anti-Corn Law League were holding a great meeting. I darted in and found myself, in a few seconds, in a complicated network of ropes, wheels, beams, and wooden columns. The place was in utter darkness. Groping for some little time with half the romance of the "Arabian Nights" in my head, and an immense amount of theatrical dust in my hands, I saw a glimmer in the distance, and making towards it, found it to be a gas-jet projecting from the wall. On the ground I saw a piece of brown paper, and lighting this, I guided myself still further, until I came to some ladder steps. I mounted these and

This Covent Garden episode has been partially recorded in "Plain English," London, 1880.

pushed open a door. Suddenly I found myself on the back of the stage, gazing up at the brilliant chandelier in the roof of the house. I could hear the murmur of many people, but could see none. I was behind the great promenade concert orchestra, which was being used as a platform for the speakers, committee, dis-tinguished visitors, &c., and the stage was completely barricaded from the auditorium by high side wooden partitions. A little behind me was a scene let down to hide the back of the stage, and form a background to the platform. The back of the platform, which extended upwards nearly to what I afterwards learned to call the "lower grooves," and the front of this "cloth," as I afterwards learnt to call it, formed an alley. At each end of the alley there were stiff ropes extending almost from the roof of the stage to the cellar underneath; and by the aid of one of these ropes and the woodwork, I climbed up till I got a view of the whole house and the whole platform. The oratorical furnace was in full blast. Those were the days when you had to pay a shilling for a four-pound losf The speaker was Mr W I Fox of whom I

Behind the speaker was a semicircle of bright, earnest men, prominent amongst whom were Richard Cobden, the leading apostle of Free Trade, who was not as clever in managing his own private affairs as he was in directing those of the public; Colonel Perronet Thompson, Mr. Milner Gibson, and Mr. John Bright, then and afterwards, all points considered, the greatest orator of his time. Their faces had been made familiar to me by engraved portraits, the art and science of photography being then in their earliest infancy. If I could have looked into the future, I should have seen Richard Cobden converting Michel Chevalier in France to the views of the so-called "Manchester School," and through him making a convert of Napoleon the Third, next to Mr. Disraeli, the most extraordinary man of the century. I should have seen Mr. Cobden rewarded with a substantial testimonial (not in plate and vellum), and wasting this money through too much faith in American railways as fields for the investment of English capital. I should have seen him rewarded a second time with money, not with lucrative office, and living peaceably in the old world Conservative City of Chichester, which is chiefly remarkable for its rump-steak puddings. I should have seen myself introduced to Mr. John Bright on a Financial Reform platform at Liverpool, when I was writing financial reform articles for Mr. Robertstone Gladstone, the brother of Mr. Gladstone, being recommended for this work by Mr. Charles Dickens. Charles Dickens was a "sentimentalist" in finance and taxation. had very little sympathy with political economy; but, believing that I knew what I was writing about and feeling sure that I was in earnest, he gave me a free hand. Our politics were much alike. When I collected some of these papers, of a purely political and financial character, and published them under

the title of "Rubbing the Gilt Off," I wished to show my admiration for Mr. John Bright by a dedication. I wrote to him and received the following letter:—

ROCHDALE, Nov. 21, '59.

DEAR SIR,

I am much obliged to you for the good opinion you entertain of me, manifested in your wish to associate your Book with my name. I can have no objection to the course you propose to take in dedicating it to me—except that possibly in some quarters it may act injuriously to its sale and to you.

I hope I may some time have the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with you. At present I know you through some of your writings, and through Mr. Lucas, of the "Morning Star."

Wishing you continued and a growing success in your literary labours,

I am, with great respect, yours, IOHN BRIGHT.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD, Esq., 11, Blandford Place, Regent's Park.

The book was duly published and duly dedicated, and I hope it did its little best to reform the Universe. This was the dedication:—

by a jump, it got to fifteen. About this time my employer wished to wind up his business—an old business—which had been left behind by larger and more pushing firms. His customers, created by his grandfather and father, amongst drapers and general dealers, including a singular race called "tally-men," were spread all over the country, excluding the extreme north. The "tally-men" were nearly all Scotch-In the old days they were called packmen, because they carried their wares, mixed with samples, on their backs, supported by long sticks held across their left shoulder like a lever. They were particularly thick in Staffordshire, the part called, very properly, "the Black Country." They nearly always lodged in parties of four, five, or six in a house, in a back street, using one room as a common warehouse. They were always sober, civil men, many of them well educated. In Wolverhampton, Dudley, Bilston, and such places. they dealt direct with the miners and iron-workers, going round to their cottages and selling them and their wives and children materials for clothes. miner or ironworker when he was dressed for a Sunday or holiday, and trade in the "Black Country" was prosperous, was a little addicted to finery. favourite trousers must be made of the best West of England black cloth, with a "face," or surface, as shiny as a mirror. His coat was the same—good broad-cloth—price no object; but his waistcoat was his great effort. Count D'Orsay, Mr. Disraeli, Harrison Ainsworth, and the London bucks of the period (I am speaking of fifty years ago) could not have been more fastidious. It was a thing of beauty and a joy for the pawnbroker when, in bad times, it was lodged as security. It was made of the brightest Utrecht cut velvet, presenting many colours, yellow, crimson, blue, and green in one piece, and looked like a display of Chinese fireworks. Those were the days of high

and the miner was only imitating his betters. ter fifties I have seen Charles Dickens wear ng dress, at a dinner party in his own house, n velvet waistcoat. as trustworthy and cheap, I was selected by oyer to go " on the road," and collect the outaccounts of the firm. As I carried no heavy I could not properly be called a "bagman. entitled to be called a "commercial traveller." an important step in my vagabond career. ry was raised to a pound a week, and I had allowance for "road money"-one pound a ring to pay all my travelling expenses. rural districts, like Kent, Surrey and Sussex. erbury I met my old cricketing friends, John er Pilch, the great players. Their father had nilor in that city, and, in their overtime, they in the same business. With no knowledge of nd no experience in driving, I had occasionire "gigs" to get across country. Sometimes lift in a carrier's cart; sometimes I found er stage-coach going the road I wanted, and es I was helped along by a brother "commero had his own trap, as he "travelled in iron," ied heavy samples. Friends of this kind often a long way round, their customers living in

villages. While they were doing business at

and visible sign being a little board nailed on the side of the hut, and partially hidden by the sunken thatch. Darwinians would see in a place like this, the germ of the great, all-grasping, co-operative store, destined to grow like humanity starting from the jelly-fish on the beach, or electricity acting on the spawn of a frog. must often have traced the store development during my commercial travels. From one barn I went into another barn that was just expanding into a shop, and found cloth, linen, tobacco, cheese, butter, boots, ribbons, arsenic, bread, nux vomica, ginger wine, physic, and hats on the same counter. As we used to say in our convivial moments in the commercial room of the inn, these places sold everything, from a muslin to a grindstone. From one village I passed into another village that gave itself the airs and name of a town. Here the chief shop was a draper's, where the master was his own shopwalker. From this village-town, I passed into a bond fide town that thought itself a city, with a municipal hall and a market-place. Here the draper was still the leading man, and had started a shopwalker. Perhaps he was a little pompous, but I possessed the true commercial traveller's instinct, and was always diplomatic and respectful. Like Mr. Biglow, I knew—

"He was a darned hard nail at a deal;
At Meeting a powerful Elder,"

but I did not tell him so. That opinion was kept for the Masonic Lodge—the Commercial Room.

Experiences like these were cheerful. Small as these towns and villages were, they had in them the seeds of development. The saddest thing was to go into a place that had a great past, a dead present, and no future; a place left high and dry by the receding sea, with a pit of mud as the material record of a

port, and a carpet of rank grass in the lifeless streets. This, in the winter time, was a penitential pilgrimage,

not commercial travelling.

From suspended animation and decay like this, the change to a busy, crowded, bustling, and somewhat "cocky" city like Birmingham, with its great railway station, one of the first built in England, its gaslighted streets, its shops, its life, and even its rowdyism, was a sensation never to be forgotten. The Birmingham of that day, of course, was not the Birmingham of the present hour. It then had a distinct flavour of Bromwichham—called in the vulgar tongue Brumma-The days were not very remote when bullbaiting was a popular sport in the hollow called the Bull-ring. Amongst its hardware products was the native prize-fighter. Prize-fighters then were honoured and trusted, and had to fight their way very hard into the pugilists' paradise—a public-house. The time was not very remote when "great contests" were fought out on Moulsey Hurst, the "meet" was at Hyde Park Corner, and the Prince Regent of England drove the champion to the scene of action in a gig.

snorting like a war-horse, "don't believe in not no God! Here!" (taking off his coat) "let me get at 'em!

I'll damned soon show 'em wot's wot!"

Another distinguished and comic pugilist of the period was Deaf Burke, the founder of "Living Pictures," the impersonator of the "Dying Gladiator" at Vauxhall Gardens, and, owing to his want of book learning, the reputed Mr. Malaprop of his generation. All these men were fighters, not posturers. Pugilism, bad or good, right or wrong, was an earnest calling, uncorrupted by modern Barnumism. Brummagem was its head-quarters.

When I first made the acquaintance of the "Brums," the fly-boat on the canals was a recognised mode of transit. Drawn by two horses on the towing-path, harnessed tandem fashion, these boats, plying for passengers between Birmingham and Woverhampton, attained a speed of about ten miles an hour. Omnibuses doing the same journey by road were always beaten. To ride outside one of these omnibuses, however, at night, when the iron-furnaces were in full blast, more than realised Doré's illustrations of Dante's "Inferno." No right-feeling person—and I had this virtue, I believe, in a small degree—could begrudge the men who worked in such a swarthy, blazing hell, the adornment on Sunday of an Utrecht velvet waistcoat.

While engaged in commercial travelling, I did not neglect my education as an ornamental traveller. I varied my study of villages, towns, and cities by a little study of scenery. By travelling night and day, I got a peep at Snowdon, and saw the wonders of the peak of Derbyshire. There was no railway between Derby, Buxton, and Manchester, but the coach-drive was one of the finest in England. It is now a race in and out of tunnels. When I was in the Black Country, I went down my first coal mine. I have

been down many since then, in various parts of . England. I was at Bilston, near the birthplace of the "Slasher," surrounded by mines, and I selected one and asked permission of the crowd at its mouth to descend it. This crowd was largely composed of women stripped naked to the waist and as black as Africans with coal dust, who were sifting the small The "Butty" or foreman was sent for, I took off my coat and hat, and especially the clean collar which I always wore, and which, I fancy, gave me an "attractive" appearance, and was soon enveloped in a rough flannel sack and put into a scale at the mouth of the pit, with another scale plate above me to act as a shield to stop falling coal. I got to the bottom when I thought I was ascending, a sensation always felt in going down a deep mine, and was dragged into a tunnel before the top shield descended on the scale, like a pair of cymbals with a heavy coil of falling chain on the top of it. Here again, when I saw the work, I did not begrudge the velvet waistcoat. Men lying on their backs, pickaxing the roof above

believe, as I believe in a God, that one day he

saw even a brighter daylight.

My treatment at the mouth of the mine was what I expected from rough and abused miners. My coat and my watch were carefully handed me back, and I became once more the young gentleman. I was not the only gentleman there. I had great difficulty in forcing on them a little present for the trouble I had

given them.

When I got into big towns, like Birmingham, I found the formalities of the commercial room very strict and very amusing. They were like a parody of a Masonic lodge, the observances of which ought to be treated with mysterious respect. Our room was sacred—carefully guarded from any "coffee-room" interlopers. Our tariff was moderate—about half that of the "coffee-room," but we had to sit down to a heavy dinner at half-past one, the first "commercial" in the house having to take the chair, the last having to become vice-chairman; each man had to pay for a pint of wine-half being port and half being sherry; this was solemnly passed round, and at the end of the dinner the "Queen" (as the circus clown says) was "drunk as usual." Port and sherry—red and white wine, as it was called-were the regulation wines before the days of "Gladstone Claret," when every small grocer thought it was his duty to buy a little "light wine," hardly knowing Hock from Grave, or Moselle from ginger-beer, and, putting it bolt upright in the shop window in the full glare of the sun, was very much astonished when he found it turned into pickling vinegar.

My career as a commercial traveller was not of very long duration. I finished my work, I believe, to the satisfaction of my employers, and gracefully retired from a fellowship which had much in it that was agreeable. In a few of the sacred temples of trade—

the commercial rooms in the big towns and big hotels-I am afraid I was sometimes looked upon as an interloper. My youth and beardless face must have annoyed many veterans of the road, who were naturally indignant that boys should be sent out to do the work of men; but amongst a little grumpiness I met with a great deal of kindness and consideration. I was modest and retiring, discreet and truthful, silent and respectful before my elders at night, when the day's work was over, the letters written by the light of dwarf candles had been sent off to London, the bargy slippers of the hotel had been brought in by the "Boots," the "bottoms" or "goes" of rum or brandy had been ordered, and smoking began. Whisky had not then come into fashion. I never became a smoker. Hard drinking was rare, and was discountenanced by the brotherhood. Many orders were given simply for the "good of the house." When I left the "road," the railways were increasing their network every day and producing a change in the "commercials," as they did in everything else. The "old bagman" was dying; the keen, pushing,

CHAPTER IX.

Edmund Yates—1856—The Daily Telegraph—Moy Thomas—Colonel Sleigh—Edward Lloyd—Colonel Richards—Edward Dicey—The Weekly Mail—The Trains—Robert Brough—G. A. Sala—Godfrey Turner—Lewis Carroll—Edward Draper—William Brough—McConnell—Bennett—The "G.P.O."—Scudamore—James Kenney—Charles Kenney—"Society Journalism"—John Oxenford—Edward Lawson—The Levy-Lawson family—Alsager of the Times—To New York in a dress suit—Mrs. Frederick Yates—A great actress—"Tinselling"—A lost fine art—The status of the actor.

ABOUT 1856, an advertisement in the papers, to which Mr. W. Moy Thomas's brother replied, introduced me to Mr. Edmund Yates. Mr. Moy Thomas was and is my oldest living friend, and in those days was my literary adviser. He had ten times the book-learning which I possessed, and many books that he had read and mastered I got the essence of, or fancied I got it, through his viva voce teaching. This was the Druidical system put on the top of Pestalozzi. I was never without a "system," and I was a good "crammer" and not a bad grasper.

Mr. Edmund Yates at that time lived in Doughty Street, Mecklenburg Square, where Dickens once had a residence. The Daily Telegraph was then in its infancy. Its founder was Colonel Sleigh, and its first editor, I think, was Colonel Richards, who claimed to be the inventor of the volunteers, although the breath of life was breathed into them by Tennyson's poem in the Times. Colonel Richards was an upright independent man, and I can quite believe that when the Colonel wanted the paper "jobbed," as it is called, for political purposes, the Colonel used the strong

language of which he was a master. His place was taken by Mr. Edward Dicey, and he eventually became the editor of the Morning Advertiser. While holding this position he died. The Daily Telegraph was not the first penny paper. Mr. Edward Lloyd, of Shoreditch, had been before Colonel Sleigh, but it was the penny paper—the pioneer of its tribe. The office stood opposite St. Clement's Church, at the corner of the passage leading into New Inn and Clements Inn.

In a little court facing the Daily Telegraph, a small printer, with a thin sad wife, dressed in black, had a feeble little broadsheet called the Weekly Mail, published—the publication being principally a deposit of a few numbers in a back parlour—at the low price of one penny. By some means, we—Moy Thomas and myself—got to know of this retiring print, and with the aid of a few shillings, or perhaps two or three pounds, we became part proprietors and sole editors. Many great papers have been begun in this way—notably the New York Herald—but the Mail

syndicate of authors, who furnished it with stories and articles. Many of these contributions were above the magazine average, the writers being Robert Brough. George Augustus Sala, Godfrey Turner, Lewis Carroll, Edward Draper, William Brough, John Brough, Thomas Archer, &c.; and the artists, McConnell, Bennett, and others. Godfrey Turner was a humourist and essayist, who would have been glorified at the beginning of the century, and Edward Draper (still living) was a humourist who did not throw away the corks of his profession—the law—and swim out boldly into the stormy ocean of literature. Godfrey Turner was sucked up by the vortex of mere journalism—the reporting department—into which I was instrumental in throwing him; and George Augustus Sala, by his commanding talent, secured a position as a newspaper writer of the highest class, which may have compensated him, if not his readers, for his comparative desertion of creative authorship. Robert Brough was the genius of this little family, who lived and died with his pen in his hand. In France he would have been an honoured member of the Academy, which may not mean much, and might have had a stone memorial, and perhaps a statue, or a street named after him, which may not mean much either, but, at any rate, is an outward and visible sign of public He started in life with one of Nature's recognition. slop-work constitutions; and, because he was an avowed Bohemian and Radical, who could get drunk, like Charles Lamb, on two pennyworth of gin, while some burly ruffian can walk steady with a distillery inside him, he was often regarded by those who knew little about him as a lost soul, an awful example, a misguided being—a man with his eyes open who had gone down the wrong turning. How many of us have gone the same road, and would do so again if the choice and opportunity offered themselves? He

ed from some internal complaint—more slop— —and, when asked what his ailment was, he is replied, "Devilled kidneys!"

hen he died and left his family about as well ded for as the families of most literary men are not literary tradesmen, it will always be tree of satisfaction to me that I was able to a prominent part in some "ground and lofty ling" which gathered the substantial sum of o for this family. His widow was a gentle, tive creature, and his children were Fanny thand Robert Brough, who have since earned e stage their positions and reputations.

rough Edmund Yates I became a contributor to rain, followed by my faithful companion, Moy las. Edmund Yates, in the daytime, was an tant clerk in the General Post Office, having for ompanion, F. J. Scudamore, the man who ind the Post Office Savings Banks, and probably ed the State purchase of the Electric Telegraph m, and conducted the negotiations for that pur-

top of Snowdon; and when you wanted him on the top of Snowdon he was always in Printing House Square. When he became "literary adviser" to the late F. B. Chatterton, of Drury Lane Theatre, this peculiarity was probably found to be a useful qualification.

Edmund Yates had many journalistic engagements. As the "Lounger at the Clubs" in the Illustrated Times, I hold that he was the originator or restorer of "Society Journalism"; but putting that on one side, he was the dramatic critic of the Daily News, and much occupied at night. His chief critical companions were John Oxenford of the Times, and Mr. Edward Lawson (now Sir Edward), who acted as dramatic reporter for his own paper, the Daily Telegraph. The family of the Levy-Lawsons were neighbours of Edmund Yates, and were then as united as they always have been. My friendly relations with them began there, and have continued to the present day through three generations and off-shoots. No one who, like myself, has watched their rise and progress through all the intermediate stages, can begrudge them a grain of their well-earned prosperity, influence, and honour. The paper is a monument of "patient labour," organising power, and journalistic instinct.

John Oxenford was what is generally called "a character." He was loaded to the muzzle with "reserved force." He often grasped a play, and certainly a plot, in ten minutes, which cost other people an hour. He was trained for his craft by a knowledge of the dramatic literature of the universe. When he was in the theatre there was little need to rush home and consult Geneste and the Biographia Dramatica for dramatic history. He had a habit of talking loudly in his box (the managers always gave him a box), which in little theatres like the Strand and Prince of Wales's, annoyed the audience some-

imes, and often provoked them to say so. He never 'slated" a play. If he could not say anything good of a piece or performance, he gratified the management by giving a column notice, which on close examination proved to be the story of the play, told elaborately from one end to the other. He had the ault of his generation. Nearly every theatre had one of his adaptations-either to play the people in or play them out, and sometimes to find them their olid meal in the middle of the programme. Some managers did all they could to spoil him, by sending nandsome retainers for him to read a piece, and give an opinion, or to edit a piece before it was put in rehearsal. He was a small shareholder in the Times. nis share, I believe, coming to him from his uncle, Mr. Alsager. Mr. Alsager was for many years the money-article writer of the Times, and used to play he organ to or with Jeremy Bentham. One day he obbed the paper to rig the Corn market, and this being discovered, and the speculation proving ruinous, ne committed suicide.

John Ovenford took a fancy to me almost before I

distinction of being the first man who went to America in a dress-suit. When he got to New York penniless, having given an I.O.U. for his passage money, he wrote to Mr. Delane for some cash: and when he got it, returned to England without having explored America or the city in which he was living. He was not a traveller.

Edmund Yates made me at his home in Doughty Street what the French call "the friend of the house" or the "son of the mansion." Being clean-shaved I looked like an actor, but gave myself the name of the "Pet Curate." To me fell the pleasing duty of escorting Mrs. Edmund Yates to the theatre on many evenings when her husband was engaged in his night work. Mrs. Yates is still living, and suffering from her recent sad bereavement, in which she has the close sympathy of multitudes of friends, and the general sympathy of the broad and intelligent public. The same remark applies to her boys. They were my little friends when they were babies, and I hope, and believe, they have not outgrown that friendship. Their father continued my friend to the day of his sudden and lamented death in 1894.

Mrs. Frederick Yates—Edmund's gifted mother the most pleasing and effective melodramatic actress of her time, was often my companion at one or other of the theatres. On the stage, as a boy, squeezing into the Adelphi pit at half-price, I had often admired her delicate yet forcible impersonations as I admired the great character acting of her husband, Mr. Frederick Yates. I amused her by telling her how I had frequently and laboriously cut out her husband's legs in Skelt or Parks's prints of him as the "Red Rover," supplying the place of the missing calves with red satin. This was known as the children's fine art of tinselling—now extinct—and it probably did more to sustain the British Drama than the Lord Chamberlain and all the schools of instruction and criticism in England. I believe my clever and prosperous little friend, Mr. Weedon Grossmith, has a fine and curious collection of these theatrical curiosities, which were the play-house advertisements of our

youth.

M's. Frederick Yates was a charming old lady, totally unaffected, very sensible, and devoted to her sor. Edmund. She had strong opinions on many points connected with her profession, and was certainly no friend of "tuft-hunting," which was not as rampant in the fifties as it is in the nineties. We were sitting one night in a box at a theatre, witnessing a finished performance by an accomplished actress and clever woman who was sorely afflicted with this weakness. "On the stage, I admire that woman," she said, "but, off the stage, I detest her. She is always gushing about her dear dukes and her dearest duchesses, although she knows that I remember

CHAPTER X.

The cholera in 1855—A bad time for Golden Square—Coffee-shops—
The king's tailor—The Georgian aroma—Chops and chess—A
new start—Household Words—Samuel Smiles—All-round scribbling—"Graphic reporting"—Out of doors—Family forebodings
—A Dickens' dinner—Stuffed mutton—Mark Lemon—Wilkie
Collins—Rarey, the horse-tamer—Gin punch—"Five shillings
and costs"—The thieves' kitchen—Author or pedestrian—A sad
event.

My business, which was unsuccessful, not from any want of industry on my part, for I was always a good worker, but from want of judgment and my trusting disposition, was situated in Warwick Street, Golden Square, in the heart of the district visited severely by the Asiatic cholera plague of 1855. In and about Poland Street, Broad Street, Wardour Street, and that neighbourhood, the scenes for me—a latent "graphic reporter"—were most dramatic. The gutters were flowing with a thick liquid, partly water and partly chloride of lime; blinds were drawn down in nearly all the houses; men, women, and children stood in groups in the middle of the road as if they thought there was safety in the warm and heavy summer air. They talked in low tones and pointed ominously to houses where the plague had made itself felt perhaps half an hour before; "front parlours" were taken by dozens in every old and stuffy street for the preparation of coffins that could not be supplied fast enough, and the peculiar sharp tap of the undertaker's hammer could be heard above the muffled sound of voices. The most impressive sign of the pestilence was the "silencing" of public-houses. Most of these thickly planted convivial resorts were closed, and if their

owners were not dead, and they were not closed for conventional decency, they were closed because their business had deserted them. The old history of the district was raked up in the papers, and much was written about the plague pit in Foucart's Place, which carried us back to the times of Charles II. The origin and spread of the disease were, of course, attributed to foreigners, who formed a large percentage of the local population; but the chief inhabitants of the district were, and still are, "working tailors," crowded cross-legged on shelves in dirty, badly-ventilated buildings that had all the vices of a Parisian hotel of the period. These poor, over-worked, sickly creatures were the slaves of the "great houses," their pale, ragged children fetching and carrying the "cutout" garments in their early stages, which were ultimately to adorn the dandies of Piccadilly and St. James's.

My resorts at this time, in my hours of ease, were two coffee shops, one in Sherrard Street, just off what was then Marylebone Street, and is now Glass-

Mr. George Augustus Sala, in the first paper he sent to Household Words, called "The Key of the Street"; and it was described, a year or two afterwards, by Mr. Moy Thomas in the same journal, in a paper called "Cogswell's."

I "used" this house, as I used several coffee shops in various parts of London, but my real "house of call" was a little shop in Warwick Street, not far from the Roman Catholic Chapel which suffered at the time of the "No-Popery" Gordon Riots. This shop was known as "Saunders's," as others were known as "Snow's" or "Pamphilion's," and the select frequenters appropriated the first-floor front room, until it became almost an offence for any stranger to be admitted. Moy Thomas came nearly every day, Mr. George Bishop, now the head of the large Anglo-French photographic apparatus firm of "Merion and Co.," and still my friend, Mr. Bird, the great chess player, who was connected with the publishing house of Hurst and Blackett, one or two "master tailors," who afterwards went into the law, either as barristers or attorneys, and a Mr. Skelton, who was the character, and, I am ashamed to say, the butt of the room.

Skelton was a fresh-coloured healthy man about seventy, always scrupulously dressed in black broadcloth with a large white Brummel cravat. He was always clothed ready for the Opera or a French Wedding. Skelton had been the "King's Tailor" the King being George the Fourth,—and he was Georgian from the crown of his evident wig to the soles of his Hoby boots. He deplored the advent of cheap tailoring—the "sixteen shilling trouser" and the "registered paletôt" which had just made their appearance, and connected them with the worst forms of democracy and radicalism—the Free Trade heresy -and everything that was bad. He indulged in the

most gloomy prognostications as to the future of England. He pitied people who had not sat under the "finest gentleman in Europe," when clothes, properly made, properly worn, high priced (and probably never paid for), marked the gentleman from the commoner. He was profoundly ignorant, but bold and self-assertive, with superficial Georgian polish that made his assumption of superiority amusing. He was very ceremonious, but his politeness, like the politeness of the French, was simply pantomimic, and his sympathies, like French sympathies, were equally parochial. He was intensely selfish. was pampered with the best chop or steak, the best coffee (which is not saying much), the best tea, the best watercresses, and the best bread and butter. The best seat had to be reserved for him, and it was understood, generally, that he condescended to use this humble coffee shop, and give a much-needed tone. to it. When you came into the room, and took off your hat, he graciously said, "Be seated: be covered!" You felt that you were in the second-

and the encouragement given me by Albert Smith, turned my attention to what, by kind permission, I will call literature. I had already written a farce, which I had read to Mr. Compton, the actor at the Haymarket, who lived in rooms at Charing Cross over Place and Carbery's, the tailors. Compton was dry, as usual, polite, hopeful, but not enthusiastic. The Train work was a labour of love, to put it delicately, and I had had a few guineas, not many, from the Disraeli paper—The Press. This I thought sufficient to justify me in becoming an author and journalist. Like my friend, Moy Thomas, I threw myself boldly at Household Words and Charles Dickens, with a little sketch of City life called "Poor Tom, a City Weed," which was based upon the sad life of a poor clerk, known to myself and Mr. Thomas. This was approved of by Dickens, and without waiting for any suggestions, I went to work with a will. choosing my own subjects, as I did, with one exception, during my long connection with that journal, and its successor, All the Year Round. England, but particularly London, was then in the agony of a commercial crisis—the accommodation bill crisis of 1857. The rich and unbridled imagination of City traders had produced the usual result—dreams. fountain played as usual in the Moorish garden of the Great Bungalow Bank of England; but the charter that made a bank note something more than a rag had to be suspended to "relieve the pressure." The folly of overtrading was always called "pressure," and always led to a clamour for the extra issue of "paper." I knew my subject thoroughly, which is not always a disqualification for writing, and I wrote The City of Unlimited Paper." It was placed on the front page of Household Words, as all papers that Dickens thought important were then placed, before the serial novelist usurped that position. It was the

leader of the week. I believe it produced an effect throughout the country. It was quoted in full in the Times, and other newspapers, of course, followed the = example of Printing House Square. Leaders were = written about it, and one in the Daily Telegraph saw in it the powerful hand of Dickens. As a matter of fact, the subject was outside Dickens's knowledge and experience, and he knew nothing of the article and the title until I sent it to him. Thackeray inquired at the Garrick Club and elsewhere about the writer, and it saved me from many of the troubles of a young beginner. The next week I sent in a story called "My Lost Home," which also got the front page of Household Words. Mrs. Gaskell, who wrote for the journal, used the central idea of the story, a year or two afterwards, in "The Manchester Marriage"; and after Mrs. Gaskell, came Alfred Tennyson with "Enoch Arden." We were both swallowed up by the great poet, as Shakespeare swallowed up his contemporaries. It was another case of the survival of the fittest. I did not linger. I suggested, and did a paper, called "Riding the Whirlwind," which was as different from the "Lost Home" as it was from the "City of Paper." It was a description of a ride on the locomotive of the South-Eastern Railway Dover Night Express, and the engine ride back again in the morning to London. A friend who materially assisted me and encouraged my efforts at this time

me to say anything about his works, which are read wherever the English language is spoken, and have furthered the cause of practical education in other countries and in other languages. He is one author, at least, who has no occasion to be dissatisfied with his publisher. He may have glorified the "self-made man" a little too much, and have preached the gospel of "getting on" a little too persistently, but his happy name and happy manner always atoned for much that never approached a defence of selfishness.

Dickens was pleased with my readiness and versatility. I believe many of my old literary friends consider that "Riding the Whirlwind," and another paper which followed immediately, and also had the front page—"All Night on the Monument"—was an early, if not the earliest effort of "Special Correspondence," or "Graphic Reporting." To this I say

only—perhaps?

I was now installed as a member of the staff—that is to say, I was allowed to send what I wrote to Messrs. "Bradbury and Evans," the printers. All Dickens's "young men" were supposed to be imitators of the master, and the master was always credited with their best productions. I hope this was so in my case, but I am afraid it was not. My subjects were not very much à la Dickens, and, bad or good, I had a blunt plain style of my own. Of the many articles I wrote for Dickens—and I wrote a great quantity—having sometimes two, and once at least, three papers in the same number, I can honestly say that Dickens's editorship did not alter six lines in as many years. faults and merits (if any) were my own. The only paper that Dickens ever suggested in any degree, and this I incorporated with an idea of Godfrey Turner's, was "What is a Pound?"—a story of two ignorant dustmen who find a sovereign in a dustbin, and start to spend it. The article was printed "in proof" and

Family Forebodings.

paid for, but never published by Dickens. When I returned it to me, after a time, I took it to the la Doctor Norman Macleod, then editor of Good Word who accepted it with pleasure, and paid me doubl the Dickens's scale, which was ample, but not sentimentally liberal. As I soon became the "champior out-door young man" of the journal, I arranged an got an allowance for travelling expenses, based on my knowledge and experience as a "commercial."

Though I started in my new calling with a fixed determination that whatever I wrote should be printed, published, and paid for by someone, and had a commercial qualification for my task which I possessed in common with my great master, my attempt to keep myself and my family with pens, ink, and paper—in other words, with a capital of twopence—was looked upon as hereditary lunacy by my relatives. They saw workhouses by day, jails by night, and starvation everywhere. My aunt, Sarah James, was great upon the crutch and walking-stick axiom, and talked about poor Sir Walter Scott when his writing powers flagged

him, having only seen the late Mr. W. H. Wills, the working editor. The office, as regards the architectural front, still exists untouched, although the interior has been lately gutted, and altered for the purposes of the Gaiety Theatre.

It was the day, in January 1858, on which the Princess Royal was married. London was crowded with visitors, and at night the whole town was illuminated. The party consisted of Wilkie Collins, Mark Lemon, Mr. Wills, the Honourable Mr. Townshend, Charles Dickens, and myself. The master, dressed in a velvet smoking coat, as part of his dress suit, received me in a very friendly manner, and made me a companion in five minutes. I noticed, as I thought then, a slight lisp, the deep lines on his face -almost furrows, and the keen twinkling glance of his eye. The room we dined in was on the upper floor. If I had taken a brick out of the south side wall then, I should have opened a communication with the Exeter Arcade, which must not be confounded with Exeter Change in the Strand where the mad elephant was shot at Cross's Menagerie about 1827. That building stood at the mouth of what is now called Burleigh Street, and the only remains of this Change is the scroll stonework and the upper part of the house next to the Lyceum Tavern, occupied now by Mr. Hall, the "pannus-corium," or tender-footed bootmaker. Exeter Arcade was a failure commercially, and its unlet shops became the haunt of literary tramps, who started a new journal every week, and slept under the counters over which they attempted to sell them. If I had taken a brick out of the south side wall of Dickens's office diningroom ten years later than the date of my first dinner with the master. I should have made a hole in the Gaiety Theatre, which had swallowed up the Arcade, and much besides.

Our dinner was simple and good. We began with oysters, brought in fresh from Old "Rule's" in Maiden Lane, near to where Congreve lived when Voltaire visited him, and told him he came to see an author, not a coxcomb. The principal dish was a baked leg of mutton, the bone of which had been taken out, and the space supplied with oysters and veal stuffing. I always understood that this was an invention of Dickens, who, without being a gourmand, was fond of eating and drinking. As I was helped twice to this novel delicacy. I remembered some of the master's descriptions of humble but savoury dishes in two or three of the Christmas books. He saw I was enjoying myself, and appeared to be delighted. conversation, if not remarkable, was amusing. Hon. Mr. Townshend was a man of title and property. and a minor poet. He was quiet and refined. Wilkie Collins discoursed pleasantly about food, and thought there was little or nothing in cookeryalthough he knew and understood French and Italian dishes—that could beat a well-made, well-cooked apple pudding Mark Lemon had just

principles were sound, but they were not deeply rooted, and he was swayed by every breath of feeling and sentiment. He was a Liberal by impulse, and what the "DRYASDUST" school would have called a "wobbler."

When the cloth was removed, Dickens treated us to another of his table inventions—his celebrated "Gin Punch." This was another Christmas Carol production, and I believe he was as proud of it as he was of The preparations for this drink were " Pickwick." elaborate and ostentatious. The kettle was put on the fire; lemons were carefully cut and peeled; a jug was produced, and well rubbed with a napkin, inside and out; glasses were treated in the same manner; the bottle was produced, the gin tasted and approved of, and the brew then began. The boiling water was poured in, the sugar, carefully calculated, was added the spirit, also carefully calculated, was poured in, the lemon was dropped on the top, the mouth of the jug was then closed by stuffing in the napkin rolled up like a ball, and then the process of perfect production was timed with a watch.

Dickens's manner all this time was that of a comic conjurer, with a little of the pride of one who had made a great discovery for the benefit of humanity. It was this interest in common things—this enjoyment of life—this absence of all apparent knowledge of his commanding position amongst the world's greatest authors, which gave Dickens one of his principal charms. No man, in his inner mind, felt so sure of Westminster Abbey and immortality, and no man kept that inner mind more carefully concealed. He lived above and beyond the opinion of his contemporaries, and was always a cheery companion for young and old. When the grog or Punch was served out, he waited, with a wink in each eye, for the verdict, which was favourable. "What do you think of it?" he

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to

asked, addressing me, as if he would be glad to have a new opinion for what it might be worth. "It is comforting," I said, "as flannel, and I should like give it a name." "Certainly," said the master. "F shillings and costs," I replied, and chanced it. T master accepted the title, but Mark Lemon did n

show any anxiety to engage me for Punch, of which he was then the editor.

My Charles Dickens was not the Dickens of Furn val's Inn, of Doughty Street, or of Devonshire Place he was the Dickens of Tavistock House, Tavistock Place (next door to Frank Stone), and the Dickens of Gad's Hill. His great—or, at least, his greatest works had been published for some time, and were being read in every corner of the world where the English language had penetrated. Those two great monuments of genius, "Barnaby Rudge" and "The Old Curiosity Shop," stood before all men, and were seized and mutilated by the piratical hacks who called themselves dramatic authors—the Fagins and Artful Dodgers of the theatres, who were protected then, as they are now, by the infamous laws of their country.

determination to do a certain distance every day, generally from two in the afternoon till seven in the evening, one mile every quarter-of-an-hour, measured by the milestones. He did his literary work mostly in the morning, from nine till about two, and usually wrote his letters at night. When he was restless, his brain excited by struggling with incidents or characters in the novel he was writing, he would frequently get up and walk through the night over Waterloo Bridge, along the London, New Kent and Old Kent Roads, past all the towns on the old Dover High Road, until he came to his roadside dwelling. His dogs barked when they heard his key in the wicketgate, and his behaviour must have seemed madness to the ghost of Sir John Falstaff.

Once, in these early morning excursions, he went into a roadside inn near his house for some refreshment, and tendered a half-crown for payment, which had become greasy-looking and suspicious by contact with a little piece of French chalk which he had in his The man did not know his customer, and the hour being suspicious and the roads much infested with tramps, he refused the coin with indignation, and made the great author understand that "smashing" was a game not popular in that district. Dickens was staggered at first, and amused afterwards; and when he really made himself known-which he had some difficulty in doing, as he was covered with the dust of a twenty-eight mile walk, and was not at first sight a trustworthy person—he was smothered with apologies.

The first muffled sounds of that domestic storm which was about to break over the heads of the Dickens' household were beginning to be heard. Though the great author, in an ill-advised "manifesto," made public matters that ought to have remained private and almost sacred, I do not feel that I am

justified in doing more than merely referring to this unhappy incident in passing. I know no more about its details than any person who was not brought into close contact, as I was, with one of the chief actors. If my knowledge was more minute, I should still hold it to be my duty to I am not writing a chronique scandaleus te character of public men and women is a sole property as the balance they keep kers; and if I write anything in these 1 faith in this honest. cate that I have lost curse my book with far more venom than ndants will who may thoughtless writing. be injured or annoy My own character I can up want I like with, and I believe I am dealing with that valueless property pretty freely.

CHAPTER XI.

Jiving — Oyster dredging — Canal life — London to Birmingham by water—Underground London—Sewer rats—The Great Eastern—A real phantom ship—A narrow escape—A shadow of futurity—A midnight discussion—"Shilling-a-lining"—William Howitt—Haunted houses—No better than atheists—An offer—Accepted—Voyages of discovery—Cheshunt—Noghost, but a dinner—Thomas—Chatterton — Moy Thomas — My first farce — J. L. Toole — The Lyceum—Dickens in the pit—Mario and Grisi.

I FOLLOWED up my outdoor subjects by going down in a diving-bell at the Admiralty Works at the Dover Pier, when that massive piece of masonry was being constructed. My bottle-holder was Mr. Walter Thornbury, who remained at the Lord Warden Hotel. was under the sea for several hours with the men, and came up with piercing pains in my head, and a slight deafness which lasted several weeks. My knowledge of sea anemones was not very profound, and I was evidently not intended by Nature for a diver; but the usual "graphic" article was written, called, I think, "Castles in the Sea." We were always very tricky with our Household Words titles, and many of them, very smart in themselves, served the purpose of raising curiosity in the mind of the reader, and concealing the subject which the writer was embroidering. I went from London to Birmingham in a "canal boat," accompanied by Mr. Moy Thomas, by the kind permission of the Directors of the Regent's and Grand Junction Canals. This was some time before Smith, of Coalville, appeared on the public scene with his revelations of canal life.

I wrote several papers called "On the Canal," not too much from a social reformer's point of view, but

nly descriptive of the people and their hab xt turned my attention to the sewers of London and new-going through about seventy miles e comparatively unknown subways. My wos was descending the "man-hole" at St. John d Chapel, and wading knee-deep down the ves channels of Mayfair, following the line of the olylebone Brook, long covered in, and known King's Scholar's Pond Sewer. When we cam iccadilly, in the dip or hollow which marks the se of the old river, the stream—chiefly rain-wate d with sewage-became too deep for wading we got into a rotten boat and rowed the remainder hs into the Thames at Pimlico. The Northern all Sewer had not then been completed. Under ingham Palace we sang "God Save the Queen," to the astonishment of the rats. The examinaof the great Outfall Sewers was a more cleanly tion, and at Old Ford, near Stratford-atte-Bowes introduced to old Mr. Brassey, the great conor, and was amused to find how well the labourers

aunched—a ship which never went to India, although was specially designed to go to India without coaling—I was present at the ceremony in my capacity of champion out-of-door young man, and was close to the stern windlass when several men were killed by

The snapping of a rope.

Near me was a rough, ungainly-looking man, whom I took for a workman, but who turned out to be the late Duke of Sutherland, then Marquis of Stafford. We were to meet often after this, in various parts of the country. We were in the fen country when the dams had broken and half the Eastern County was under water. We were down the Lundhill Pit, at Barnsley, in Yorkshire, soon after the great and terrible explosion which cost two hundred lives; and we were on board the Great Eastern when she was being hurried round from London to Weymouth, halffinished, but having to make a "trial trip," for financial reasons. Dickens came to Greenhithe to see me off, on his road to Gad's Hill (this time by rail, as he had visitors), and my companion was Mr. George Augustus Sala, who represented the Daily Telegraph. The late Mr. Scott Russell was on board, the engineer-shipwright who had built the ship, which was designed by the younger Brunel—a sensational constructor, like his father, the hero of the Thames Tunnel. Mr. Russell took his place on the bridge by the side of the unfortunate Captain Harrison and the pilot, and helped to steer the vessel in a courtly manner that was a lesson in deportment to rough-and-ready mariners. The pilot was in evening dress—the Wapping notion of evening dress—as pilots, for some reason, always are. My berth was a large one on the first lower deck, with a settee opposite the door arranged round the base of one of the funnels. This berth I occupied with Mr. Sala. Mr. Sala suffered even then from extreme short-sightedness, and, as he had no amanuensis on board, he knelt down at a table and wrote with his face close to the paper.

We were sitting in the dining-saloon at dinner, about half-past six, the dinner being served at separate tables. At our table we had Mr. Sala and myself, Mr. Washington Wilks, Mr. Herbert Ingram (the proprietor of the Illustrated London News and a Director of the Company owning the ship), his young son, about fourteen, and several others whose names I have forgotten, but who were all journalists. Mr. Reed, now Sir Edward Reed, M.P., and late chief constructor of the Navy, was on board, representing the Mechanics' Magazine for Mr. Passmore Edwards. I think he was one of our party. We were about to propose Mr. Ingram's health when a sound like violent thunder was heard, followed by a thud on the deck that seemed to shake the whole vessel. Many of us who had noticed the unfinished state of the ship and the workmen constantly working in odd corners, were prepared for any catastrophe. looked at each other and sprang to our legs, but were stopped by Mr Wilks "I think gentlemen" he

impression of a Scotch Jew, with a dash of the Malay pirate—took Mr. Ingram by the shoulders, and bundled him into a chief-mate's cupboard on deck, saying, "You damned fool, you've got your son under your arm!" Was some shadow of the future passing across poor Mr. Ingram's mind? A year afterwards, he and that son lost their lives in a steamboat explosion on Lake Michigan.

I rushed down to my cabin—it was gone! and in its place was about a quarter of an acre of ruin—splintered wood, broken glass, and fragments of furniture. Cries issued from underneath this heap, and Captain Harrison rushing by, I drew his attention to it. It don't know what I said, or how I said it, but he threatened to put me in irons. Poor man! he was drowned the next year in Southampton Waters.

I got help, and we extricated a passenger from the heap, merely wounded slightly, with a few splinters stuck in various parts of his body. The most serious part of the accident was in the stoke-hole, where about half-a-dozen poor labourers were scalded to death. I went down and saw them, plastered over with oil and wool. I knew what that meant—death! I had seen the same thing at a pit's mouth, and I had had two playmates burnt to death at different times.

The whole of the night was exhausted in a discussion, at an informal board meeting, on the terms "collapse" and "explosion." The owners of the boat, headed by the assertive Chairman, Mr. Roy Campbell, had their own reason for preferring collapse to explosion, but I, for one, could not appreciate the reason, and I took the liberty of saying so. The partial destruction of the grand saloon, and the quarter of an acre of splinters, I held were sufficient evidence of an explosion, although this may have been technically caused by a "collapse of the feed-water

casing." As the night was cold, and Mr. Sala and myself had lost all our luggage, I borrowed an overcoat from the Marquis of Stafford. When we arrived at Weymouth, the instinct of the born journalist began to move me. I got a pass from the local railway superintendent for London, and arrived in Fleet Street about midnight. I walked into the Weekly Dispatch office, and wrote against time for the Sunday edition a third of a column about the explosion, for which I eventually got five guineas.

On Sunday morning I walked into the Morning Post office, as I knew their representative had left us at Gravesend, preferring London to the journey. This representative had assumed that the voyage would be all "chicken and champagne," and he had written a paragraph for a "special edition" on the Saturday, stating that the vessel had arrived in Weymouth, after a most pleasant and successful voyage. The streets were not then flooded with evening papers. I took possession of the Morning Post that particular

racks, was also "declined with thanks." He had not forgotten the recent Crimean War, and suggested that "buying out" might be difficult in the event of

another European complication.

About this time the Master had got somehow into a public discussion with William Howitt on the question of "Haunted Houses." Mr. Howitt was an avowed spiritualist, and had the habit, too common at that period, of calling everyone an Atheist who did not quite agree with him. I came to the rescue of my distinguished employer with a bond fide offer. I was ready to occupy any house, in any part of the town, no matter how "haunted," on one condition—I was to have a moderate lease of the house, rentfree, giving an undertaking to live in it, and test it as a tenant.

This offer was duly made to Mr. Howitt, and it is surprising how his supply of "haunted houses" decreased immediately. Before that, they were supposed to exist in every street; now, they were as difficult to find as the site of the Holy Sepulchre. The house in Berkeley Square, which was a mystery for many years, until it was recently converted into flats and residential chambers, was spoken of, but possession was not, at that time, to be obtained at any price. A tumble-down pot-house in Holborn was one of the rookeries on order; but when inquiry came to be made, it was only haunted by the claims of brewers and distillers, and it was not to be given away, either with or without a demoniac license.

At last, after much correspondence, a house was found, or supposed to be found, at Cheshunt, Herts—if "Dickens's young man" would not object to that healthy but haunted township? "Dickens's young man" did not object to Cheshunt, and an excursion was arranged, to visit the property. Wilkie Collins and W. H. Wills were sent down in a brougham,

wisely provided with fish, as Dickens did not care to trust altogether to the local hotel or inn. Dickens and I walked down—a fair toe-and-heel walk of sixteen miles, through Stoke Newington, Stamford Hill, Tottenham, etc. I had only recently recovered from a rheumatic attack, and was a little stiff on my "pins," but when I got warm I was quite equal to the task, although the mechanical pace, marked by milestones and a watch, rather bored me. Many people passed us at intervals, who recognised the Master; one or two saluted him, and he replied with an extra twinkle of the eye.

We arrived at Cheshunt, and began to make inquiry. No one had heard of any "haunted house," or anything so disreputable in the town. Cheshunt rather prided itself on its trim respectability. At last, we had to fall back upon the oldest inhabitant. He was not very old, but quite old enough for our purpose. Diving into the recesses of his memory, he remembered a house, about thirty years previous to our visit that once had a reputation for ghosts—

The Poet Chatterton.

walking-boots for a pair of shoes, which had been ught down in the brougham. The dinner was a stantial meal, after Dickens's own heart, and the was nectar. This began and ended the first and ly chapter of "Ghosts" according to the gospel of illiam Howitt.

My friend Mr. Moy Thomas, who could write Sushingly as well as any of us, was a very patient Collector of facts and investigator of rate-books—a virtue he probably learnt from old Mr. Dilke, the founder of the Athenaum, for whom he acted for several years as private secretary. Moy Thomas had made up his mind that the house in which Chatterton died, in Brook Street, Holborn, was not the house accepted by Professor Masson and others. He established his point by proving, from the rate-books, that it was on the other side of the street; and that the dying poet, looking out of his back-garret window. could not have seen St. Paul's glistening in the moonlight (as in Ward's picture), because his dead face was turned westward, towards Gray's Inn Lane, and the old block of buildings associated with Francis, Lord Bacon. This matter-of-fact discovery destroyed no sentiment, as Gray's Inn was more in harmony with Chatterton's brief poetic life than St. Paul's Cathedral.

While Moy Thomas was making his investigations, we visited the house, then (about 1858) in the occupation of a working cabinet-maker. He was fairly polite, but evidently regarded our inquiries, first with suspicion, and afterwards as a nuisance. The situation struck me as being full of comedy, and in a few days I had written a farce, which I called *The Birthplace of Podgers*. My favourite low comedian at that time was Buckstone, although I was an admirer of Keeley, Wright, Harley, and

.... 11aymarket and was not to be defeated. Toole in the Strand, opposite th that pioneer of cheap magazin prietor of which, Mr. Limbird, small dusty panes of his shop w dreamy wonder at the flood periodicals, which must have seem avalanche of print and paper. To me by Edmund Yates, and s

certain stories of mine in Househo. he was a diligent reader. protege of Charles Dickens, who ha amateur at the Walworth Institute

him to adopt the stage as a professi at the Haymarket first, and the wards. At that time he was at th the management of Mr. Charles Di considerable melodramatic genius. about the farce, and he was quite will He came up to my house a few Blandford Place, Regent's Park, and little piece, and gave him my idea character—a stolid working man, with limited powers of speech, brought int literary enthusiasts, whom he natural

low ---

Dickens handsomely atoned for his original coldless about the farce by paying to go into the pit on the first night, and writing to congratulate us on our success. The piece was too unconventional to obtain instant popularity, but it learned to labour and to wait. It has been a great favourite with many amateur actors, and notably of Wainwright, the smurderer.

Dickens probably thought I had some little talent for dramatic writing after this, for he proposed collaboration in a sketch of the German Reed order, which he was anxious to have well done, for some friends in whom he took an interest. We never got very far with this scheme, as it was knocked on the head by the "manifesto," and all that followed.

I was always attracted to theatres, though I was not as acutely afflicted with Thespis-mania as Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd, who, when on circuit, rarely spent an evening out of a play-house. Dickens had the same passion for the footlights.

When Covent Garden was being re-built, after the fire, I wrote an article in *Household Words* about its aspect and progress, and on the opening night I was allowed to get in everybody's way on the stage, to write a paper for the same journal, on the first production—Meyerbeer's opera of the *Huguenots*.

I saw Mr. Augustus Harris's method of working, admired the skill with which he swore in three or four languages, and was brought into contact with the two greatest dramatic singers of the age—Grisi and Mario. The Huguenots I look upon as the greatest work of a great master, and I have heard it in most of the opera-houses of Europe, but never rendered as it was with Madame Grisi as "Valentine," and Signor Mario as "Raoul." The physical and mental qualifications of the latter singer, the dramatic fire, the perfect voice, and the distinguished air have

never been equalled in one single person; and each singer (Mario and Grisi) seemed to inspire the other. I stood at the wing, near the window through which "Raoul" leaps to death at the close of the fourth act, and I never saw a man who was more carried away by the spirit of his part. He was absolutely drunk and dazed with music and excitement, and staggered into the arms of admiring scene-shifters, taking a few minutes to recover himself. A truly grand opera; a truly grand pair, and a grand production, put on without State patronage and a State subvention. In France the chief opera-house gets about £50,000 a year from the country; in England the State patronises a similar enterprise by exacting heavy rates and taxes. I am not an advocate of subventions, whether for serious or comic opera, or for theatres like the Français and Odéon, and I think the difference between the two countries ought to be mentioned in passing.

CHAPTER XII.

Indoor papers—All the Year Round—The Guild of Literature and Art—Knebworth—Bulwer—A roadside alehouse—Dodd the dustman—The cinder-heaps—A whitey-brown festival—The dramatic college—"Boffin"—Benjamin Webster—A great actor—A thorough protectionist—A believer in finality—Vulgar clowning—Wright—Buckstone—Miss Woolgar—Madame Celeste—Paul Bedford—O'Smith—Frederick Yates.

HAD varied my many outdoor papers with papers that smelt more of the lamp. I had shown a pretty taste for humour in "Too Weak for the Place," Gipsy King," etc.; I had advocated commercial reform in "Twenty Shillings in the Pound," "Debtor and Creditor," "Bankruptcy in Six Easy Lessons," etc.; I had given my notions of electoral reform in a long story. called "The Humiliation of Fogmoor,"—a paper that commended itself at the time to the present Lord Rosebery; and I had favoured Household Words and its twin-brother, All the Year Round, with a number of short stories. Stories of this kind were much in demand, and when pressed to write them my reply was very simple: "A short story is the compressed essence of a novel; the more you compress it, the less you get for it. Blown out with wash, the material makes a three-volume novel, and you win one hundred pounds instead of five." I was obliged to talk like this, because political economy, if it governed nothing else in Wellington Street, certainly governed (and very properly, too,) the business conduct of the journal.

When Dickens's domestic trouble came to a head, the printers, Bradbury and Evans—who had a share, I presume, in *Household Words*—sided with Mrs. Dickens,

he Master at once, in his Napoleonic way, deto stop one journal and start the other. The where I had eaten my first "Pickwickian" leg atton was let to the Army and Navy Gazette, in

Dr. W. H. Russell and Mr. J. O'Dowd were sted; and a shop being taken higher up the at the corner of York Street (one of the fourteen Streets in London), All the Year Round was and was the image of its father.

and was the image of its father.

e Guild of Literature and Art, which in the Daily
I had irreverently called the "Sleeping Beauty,"
not altogether realising the aspirations of its
pters. The first Lord Lytton—better known as
ver," though he was once announced by a footat a literary soirée as "Sir George Earl Edward
in Bulwig"—had given a plot of ground on his
at Stevenage, Herts, which having then only an
altural, as distinguished from a building, value,
ot much, to form the basis of a literary charity.
Lytton did more. He wrote a comedy, called

o Bad as We Seem, and this being acted by such

gave the Master liberty to invite any literary friends who were interested in the scheme to a luncheon and garden-party; and Dickens took a broad and liberal view of this permission. A crowd of sympathisers and non-sympathisers, members of the council and non-members, journalists, authors, and artists, assembled at King's Cross one summer's morning, and tested the twenty mile railway journey to Stevenage. One practical gentleman put a few leading questions, which resulted in answers not quite favourable to the charity. There was no fund to endow the residences, and a railway season ticket would have cost the rental value of each dwelling.

Dickens met us at the Stevenage Station. He was lively and juvenile, like a healthy boy out for a holiday. He headed an adjournment to a roadside ale-house, giving us what is called a "straight tip" that we had better have a wholesome rural drink, in case of accident. We were a noisy crew, and must have astonished the railway villagers. Some of us sat on the horse-trough, others swarmed into the "tap." Some drank a pint, some a quart, and some called it "belly-vengeance." I found it more likely to affect the stomach than the head, and wondered what kind of tipple Oliver Cromwell brewed at

Huntingdon.

We duly arrived at Knebworth, after inspecting the Stevenage Almshouses (or houses without alms), and were introduced, jointly and severally, to our noble host—the cleverest man of his generation, with the exception of Mr. Disraeli. Lord Lytton was not one of those men who had the art of growing old with grace. He had a keen, Jewish look, and would have made an imposing figure in a synagogue. Outside, in a garden, in the bright sunshine, with all his "make-up"—the remnant of his "dandy" days, which he had never altogether turned his back upon—he

was only imposing for his talent and literary reputation. It seemed to me, not very long since, that I had read in Chambers's Fournal—then a broad-sheet weekly magazine, about the size of a newspaper—a story called "Perourou, the Bellows Mender" (translated, of course, from the French), which Bulwer had cleverly turned into the ever-popular drama of The Lady of Lyons. Not many weeks before my visit I had decided, in my critical mind, that he was the creator of the two champion cads of dramatic literature, Claude Melnotte and Alfred Evelyn, in Money. Still, I am grateful to him for his power of story-telling,—for books like "Night and Morning," "Paul Clifford," "Pelham," and a dozen others. His electro-plated philosophy lighted up his characters, as the limelight was just then beginning to light up his plays; and I ate his luncheon, drank his ball-room wine, and listened to Dickens's speech—delivered standing on a chair—with gratitude.

We returned to the station in the cool of the evening, Dickens returning with us; and, although we did not Dustman," whose cinder-mountains adorned the canal banks of Shepherdess Walk, on the road from the Eagle Tavern to Merry Islington. Dodd the Dustman used to give an annual party, or "bean-feast," in his grounds, when his Hottentot Venuses, the sifters, washed their faces, and, like the woman in "Les Charbonniers," often looked charming; and the dustmen, with clean smocks, ribbons and flowers, were like model ploughmen at a well-managed agricultural festival. The neighbouring brickmakers were not altogether unbidden to this feast, and the guest of honour was generally Mr. Rouse, the proprietor of the Eagle. When the shades of evening prevailed, and the liberal amount of beer, lightened by "something short," had done its work, it was wise to draw a veil over the final proceedings.

Dodd the Dustman, who really meant charity, though he may have clogged it with some unpalatable conditions, was not well treated by Dickens and his party. Dickens soon withdrew from the Dramatic College scheme, leaving it principally to Mr. Robert Bell, and its president, Mr. Benjamin Webster. Dodd the Dustman had the barren honour of sitting for his portrait in "Our Mutual Friend." He was called

" Boffin."

Mr. Benjamin Webster was for many years the most distinguished actor-manager in London. He was more bold and speculative than Buckstone, or even than Charles Kean. The Keeleys dabbled in management, but in connection with Charles Kean; and the Wigans had the Olympic, where they were lucky enough to introduce Robson to a West-end audience. Mr. Benjamin Webster was associated chiefly with the Haymarket and the Adelphi. At the former house he paid the Irish comedian, Power, fifty pounds a night—a salary that equalled Edmund Kean's in his best days. Webster was an actor of genius, with

a strong personality. As a manager he bought nearly every play that was offered to him at a moderate price, in order to make what is now called a "corner" in dramatic productions. His dressing-room and study at the Adelphi were like a literary rag-shop, and the amount of rubbish found there when he died would have furnished a minor theatre with plays for a century. He was a thorough protectionist in his calling; believed in the Thirty-nine Articles of the most bigoted Lord Chamberlain, and in the divine right of managers to govern wrong. By managers he meant only properly licensed theatrical managers; and considered that music-halls should either be put down, or only tolerated as "sing-songs," "free-andeasies," and pot-houses. He headed the prosecution of certain music-halls for the reputed infringement of the Theatres Act, the nominal prosecutor being Horace Wigan, a brother of Alfred Wigan, who was a clever but somewhat soured and disappointed comedian. With all his failings (and none of us are without them). Webster was one of Dickens's most

elegantiarum of the stage; but I am afraid he merited the title I gave him in Household Words (which, I presume, represented the opinion of Charles Dickens), that of "An Official Scarecrow." Farces like The School for Tigers at the Adelphi, and Lend Me Five Shillings at the Haymarket, though provocative of mirth to the verge of apoplexy, were disfigured by gags that could only be excused on the ground that they suited the taste of the period. These theatres were quite the most fashionable in London, although the Lyceum, in the person of the handsome and respected Miss Fairbrother, provided a morganatic Duchess of Cambridge. They were the houses where the Oueen and Prince Albert always retained a royal box. Wright was a great comic genius, and nothing else, with about as much power of sentimental acting as you may find in a Cheshire cat; and Buckstone, in a different way, was equally funny and limited. His voice heard at the wings, when his little plump body and rubicund face were out of sight, was a signal for a house full of laughter. He was a prolific scribbler for the stage, and a wholesale adapter. Amongst his hundred or two hundred plays were the Adelphi dramas made to order, such as The Flowers of the Forest and The Green Bushes. These were arranged and written for a company that comprised the inimitable Miss Woolgar, who became Mrs. Alfred Mellon; Madame Celeste, a clever pantomimist who, like the late M. Johnson of the Figaro, never learnt much English and could hardly speak it; Paul Bedford, a licensed droll with a deep voice, and a personal popularity that made him acceptable in anything; Wright, the inspired vulgarian; O'Smith, with the sepulchral voice, who was always condemned to play villainous fiends or fiendish villains, and who was a quiet collector of old books and scarce editions in private life, living like a schoolmaster at Camberwell;

Hudson, a pleasant-singing Irish comedian—a copy of Power—and many other well-known names who kept the theatre going after the death of Frederick Yates and the retirement of his widow.

Frederick Yates was at one time in partnership with Terry, the friend of Sir Walter Scott, and always held that the "old Adelphi" would be ruined if it were altered, as the public only appreciated seats that they had to fight for, and rather liked discomfort. Mr. Benjamin Webster, when he obtained possession of the theatre, with all his protectionist feelings, practically differed from this old-fashioned view, and he rebuilt and re-opened the New Adelphi about 1859, probably scenting the reconstruction revolution which was just appearing above the horizon.

CHAPTER XIII.

Sayers and Heenan—Layard and Dickens—Bell's Life—Frank Talfourd—James Lowe—Hepworth Dixon—Lord Houghton—The Times—"Nick" Woods—Ada Isaacs Menken—Mazeppa—Poems—A dedication—A letter—The Lighthouse—Robson—The Olympic—The Rad Vial—Madame Ristori—Dickens as a dramatist—The Tale of Two Cities—Charles Fechter—A premature criticism—The Albion tavern—The nights of liberty.

WHEN the great event of the century was approaching—the fight between Sayers and Heenan—I was. by virtue of my position on Household Words, the proper person to watch and report it. There was an affectation of mystery about the time and the place, and the police, without being obtrusive, had to justify their office by seeming to be watchful; but sporting opinion, represented and sustained by Lord Palmerston, decided that the International Contest, as it was called, should not be effectively interfered with. It was a clever game of make-believe, to satisfy that feeling which we now call the "Nonconformist Conscience." Sayers was an honest, trustworthy pugilist, and Heenan was a gentleman amongst his There was no pot-house bluster about the class. two combatants, and anything of that kind was confined to the camp followers of the "Ring," who were not as numerous or as noisy as they are at present.

Dickens was always careful about the safety of his champion-out-door young man, and the editor of Bell's Life—a paper that was then a power in the sporting world—was asked particularly to look after me, in case anything happened. After a little hesita-

tion, Dickens decided to go with me as a spectator, but this decision had to be abandoned. I got three tickets, as Dickens thought he might bring a friend, for which I paid, or rather Dickens paid, the very moderate sum of twelve guineas. The "tip" was at last communicated. I was to be at London Bridge Station at daybreak, on a certain spring morning, to meet a number of friends who were very much interested in the pleasant county of Surrey, especially

Farnborough.

My friend Frank Talfourd had chambers in the Temple, and he kindly prepared a substantial breakfast before I started. The only other person present was Mr. James Lowe, the editor of the Critic—a literary journal—one of the group owned by Mr. Cox at the corner of Wellington Street, where the new offices of the Morning Post now stand. My movements were known, as I believed I had to meet Dickens with the tickets, but about three o'clock in the morning a message came from the Master who was at Gad's Hill, saying that "Nineveh" Layard was staying with him, and had scruples about attending the

(afterwards Lord Houghton), then a renowned poet of the tender passions. I noticed the singular facts that the future Lord Houghton—literary man, great conversationalist, and collector of curiosities—represented Pontefract, which is something like Latin for broken-bridge, its previous representative having been

Mr. Gully, the prize-fighter.

The contest needs no description—it is part of the history of England. Herodotus would have been puzzled to have decided who won, and who lost. It was declared "a draw." By the rules then existing, Sayers, the smaller man, a little bronze Hercules, with his clever sparring and "tactics" was enabled to prolong the fight for over two hours. Heenan was at least a foot higher than his opponent, but looked white and delicate. A splendid account appeared in the Times on the following morning, written by "Nick" Woods, one of their best "specials," not forgetting Doctor Howard Russell, better known as "Billy." Mr. Archibald Forbes was not then a journalist, but a soldier. My résumé could not appear for two weeks, as our journal was always printed a fortnight in advance. It struck me as being (like certain other articles on topics of passing interest) "a month behind the fair."

I saw Heenan occasionally after this, and found him a quiet, gentlemanly athlete. Like most Americans, he was a temperate man. His wife, Ada Isaacs Menken, a handsome Jewess, with a faultless figure, caused a sensation in London by appearing as Mazeppa at Astley's. She had the faculty of interesting men of genius. Alexandre Dumas (the elder), in France, and Algernon Swinburne and Charles Dickens, in England, came under her artistic influence. She published a volume of poems, called "Infelicia," dedicated to Charles Dickens. The book contains an effusive letter from Charles Dickens at Gad's Hill.

written in the familiar bright blue ink, with the date in words (his invariable custom), and the lines, like a stave for music, waiting for crotchets and quavers, under the signature.

GAD'S HILL PLACE,
HIGHAM-BY-ROCHESTER, KENT.
Monday, Twenty-first of October, 1867.

DEAR MISS MENKEN,

I shall have great pleasure in accepting your dedication, and I thank you for your portrait, as a highly remarkable specimen of photography.

I also thank you for the verses enclosed in your note. Many such enclosures come to me, but few so pathetically written, and fewer still so modestly sent.

Faithfully yours, CHARLES DICKENS.

With Dickens's love for the theatre, and his theatrical friendships, it is strange that he never became a successful dramatic author. He was a fairly good actor, but not, I think, as great as many of his friends asserted. Practice and study—which are the life-blood of the

in the early fifties, when he burst upon the town as a dramatic meteor, at the same theatre; but nothing could have saved the Red Vial. Robson died a few years later of dipsomania. He was a little nervous man with a large head and a small body; his legs and feet were particularly neat. He was a bundle of nerves. When he spoke to you and shook hands, they were damp with perspiration; when he acted, on a first night, he was sick after nearly every scene. No one knows the agony of the stage, except those who are on it. His tragedy was terrific for a few minutes, and his lapses into common-place most comic and startling. His style was his own. He was said to be a small copy of Edmund Kean, whom he probably never saw, and if he did, he could not have had as many years as he possessed fingers, and then it must have been Kean in his decadent days. made his first hit in my friend Frank Talfourd's burlesque of Shylock, and followed that up with other similar creations. Madame Ristori has left on record her astonishment on seeing his travesty of Medea—her own Medea. The female drudge with two unruly brats—the sweepings of the streets—was lighted up with intermittent gleams of Greek fire. Robert Brough was the author of the words; Robson was the inventor of the spirit. He was one of the most humorous and original farce actors—unlike any of the popular low comedians—and could breathe the breath of eccentric life into the vulgarest comic song. His Wormwood in The Lottery Ticket, his Jem Baggs in The Wandering Minstrel, his Pawkins in Retained for the Defence, and a host of other characters, seem to have died with him. His nervousness made him doubt his own staying powers. He was once, and only once, nearly testing this theory, by playing Triboulet in a new version by Mr. Tom Taylor of Victor Hugo's Le Roi s'Amuse, but the

"Waterloo Bridge mystery" cropped up and frightened him. A bag containing parts of a mutilated body was found on one of the blocks of steps of Waterloo Bridge leading to the river, and it was never settled whether a medical student's hoax had been played or a murder had been committed. After Robson's death the drama went to Sadler's Wells Theatre, and provided Samuel Phelps with an effective character.

Charles Dickens's little early productions which he wrote for Braham, the great singer, at the St. James's Theatre — such as the Village Coquettes — were only vehicles for songs. He had a hand in one or two authorised adaptations of his novels and stories, generally produced at the Adelphi, although Martin Chusslewit was performed at the Lyceum, and he avowedly collaborated with his friend Charles Fechter in the version of "The Tale of Two Cities" which was played at the Lyceum. This play gave birth to a piece of far "too previous" criticism. An able but unfriendly critic—not in love with either Dickens or

with operas and singers whose notes and style he could hum to you across the tavern table. That tavern, in those days, was a club, without club formality. Dickens dined there nearly once a week, and the literary and dramatic world was always well represented. The police never interfered with its opening or closing in those days and nights of liberty, which ended in 1872 with Lord Aberdare's and the Liberal Government's slap you and put you to bed measure—the infamous Half-past Twelve o'clock Act.

CHAPTER XIV.

Mr. Dilke—The Athenaum—The Daily News—"Junius"—Burke—Pope—Lady Mary Wortley Montagu—"Notes and Queries"—Alcohol as a cure—The Duke of Queensberry—Old "Q" of Piccadilly—Ladies of the period—Manners of the period—Family cares—Defective memory—Gigs—Dickens as a newspaper editor—Midnight footmen—Proofs on salvers—The deaf editor—Bad for Cabinet secrets—Thomas Carlyle—"Sartor Resartus" refused as a serial—Sulks in Cheyne Row—Sporting experiences—A candid driver—The paper duty—Repealed—The world still lives.

I HAVE spoken before of Mr. Dilke, the founder of the Athenæum, for some little time the editor of the Daily News in the infancy of that paper, and the grandfather of the present baronet, M.P., and prominent politician. The house in Sloane Street—the famous 76—has been the modest family mansion of the Dilkes for more than half-a-century, and here Mr. Dilke lived and died in a quiet patriarchal fashion

he must have been as active as the most bustling man of business. He was a temperate man in the highest sense of the term, and found the benefit of his temperance at a critical moment. When long past seventy years of age, an inflammation in one of his feet threatened mortification. The doctor decided on a violent remedy—violent for a man who for years had been a confirmed water-drinker. "Can you drink a bottle, or perhaps two bottles, of strong brandy in a few hours?" was the question. "I don't know," said Mr. Dilke, "but I'll try." He drank the brandy, the mortification was stopped, and Mr. Dilke lived and worked for several years afterwards, thanks to alcohol.

Mr. Dilke loved nothing better than to encourage young men, and both Mr. Moy Thomas and myself are deeply indebted to him for much sound advice and instruction, and the habit of taking nothing for granted. His advice in business was to have fiveeighths of an enterprise, so as to get the controlling power without being burdened with the whole. lived in the days before "limited liability" had been invented. His description of the manners of the early part of the century would hardly bear printing, invented. though there was no reason to doubt its accuracy. He knew the "society" of his time as well as he knew his literary contemporaries. His anecdotes covered the Duke of Queensberry ("Old Q. of Piccadilly"), noble lords whose patronage of the stage was confined to popular and attractive female members of the profession, and even ladies who had not the excuse of the stage to justify their well-advertised ephemeral existence. All these people, and many more, he touched off with a light hand which would have made the fortune of a modern "society journalist." He told us how an important publisher passed his Sundays in driving in a gig round Hendon waywhich included Hampstead, Mill Hill, Edgware, Kingsbury, etc.—visiting many illegitimate children stationed at legitimate schools, his path being crossed by an equally important comedian, in an exactly similar gig, who was travelling on a similar errand to visit out-

lying members of his f was not as good as i is supposed to culticould not clearly re Stanmore, and Billy Handel's "Harmor near the forge, and he comedian's memory r's, although the stage luable faculty, and he ether Tommy was at orge—which suggested csmith "—or Tommy e heights of Mill Hill,

amongst the Roman Catholic settlements. Gigs were then not only a sign of respectability, according to Thurtell the murderer, but they were nearly a necessity of existence. They were not elegant conveyances when filled by very fat men. I remember seeing Mr. Robertstone Gladstone—the brother of Mr. Gladstone—driving about Liverpool, looking like nothing but a huge limekiln on wheels. We called him Mr. Robert Twenty-stone Gladstone.

Mr. Dilke used to tell us of the early days of the great Liberal paper—the Daily News—when Charles Dickens was the editor, and proofs were brought in on plated salvers, not by grimy printer's "devils," but by gorgeous beings in livery, who looked like midnight The Daily News while Mr. Dilke was footmen. speaking, and when I was first connected with it, was not so elegantly waited upon, and its offices in Bouverie Street, next door to the Punch offices, might have been described without rudeness as hovels. It had an amiable and able editor who suffered from deafness, and when trusty messengers came down in the dead of the summer's night or the very early morning to report mighty Cabinet secrets—these secrets, shouted to a gentleman who would not use an ear-trumpet, escaping through the open windows of the stuffy

included Hampstead, Mill Hill, Edgware, Kingsetc .- visiting many illegitimate children stationed itimate schools, his path being crossed by an y important comedian, in an exactly similar gig, vas travelling on a similar errand to visit outmembers of his family. The comedian's memory ot as good as the publisher's, although the stage posed to cultivate this valuable faculty, and he not clearly recollect whether Tommy was at hore, and Billy near the forge-which suggested el's "Harmonious Blacksmith"-or Tommy he forge, and Billy on the heights of Mill Hill. gst the Roman Catholic settlements. Gigs were not only a sign of respectability, according to ell the murderer, but they were nearly a necesexistence. They were not elegant conveyances filled by very fat men. I remember seeing obertstone Gladstone—the brother of Mr. Glad--driving about Liverpool, looking like nothing huge limekiln on wheels. We called him Mr. t Twenty-stone Gladstone.

houses, became the common property of Fleet Street, and nearly of Ludgate Hill and the *Times* newspaper.

Mr. Dilke as an editor of the Athenaum, before he handed the literary control to Mr. Hepworth Dixon, made many friendships and some enemies. Amongst the rest he offended Thomas Carlyle for life, because he resolutely declined to admit "Sartor Resartus" into the journal as a serial. Carlyle could not, or would not, understand why this philosophical allegory was not allowed space—and plenty of it—in a journal mainly devoted to reviews, and sulked for the remainder of his life in his tent at Cheyne Row, which was not very far from Mr. Dilke's tent at Chelsea. Carlyle began his writing career with simple straightforward prose that was as decorous as a Times leader, and he did not develop his broken-granite style until a later period of his career. He was a great man—great in his strength, and great in his weakness —and probably the most obstinate and wrong-headed penman who ever adorned English literature.

Mr. Dilke's literary "remains" are not voluminousthose that are published. They consist chiefly of "Papers of a Critic," by D. (published by John Murray). Mr. Dilke was a giant on the authorship of "Junius" question, and a determined foe of the Sir Philip Francis theory. No public writer was ever so clear, sharp, and convincing—so rich in facts and dates. He always contented himself (in the "Junius" case) by proving a negative. The moment an idol was set up in the printing and publishing market-place, he at once made an "Aunt Sally" of it. His theory, if he had a theory, was that the writer was not in any way a prominent man, and might turn out to be Brown, Jones, or Robinson—a writer who could write, who had the Divine power of political hatred, and who was supplied with information by officials who were not blessed with his unique gift of invective.

age of financial "wobbling"—is entitled to take and keep an independent position. It owes no gratitude to the repealers or their friends; and may be excused for any sneaking kindness it may show to their enemy—that vis inertia of the State—that eternal non-possumus, which would have stopped creation at its source while a Royal Commission sat and manufactured blue-books.

CHAPTER XV.

The Lyceum—Miss Marie Wilton—Charles Dillon—Belphegor—The Times—The Strand Theatre—Burlesque—The Swanboroughs—H. J. Byron—John E. Clarke—James Rogers—Mrs. Raymond—James Bland—"Step dancing "—A new dance—A new teacher—A new pupil—The Maid and the Magpie—The Adelphi—Pantomime à la Watteau—St. James's Theatre—A dying actor—Albert Smith—His death—His brother Arthur—Barnum—An amateur pantaloon—The Savage Club—The "Réunion"—The "Urban"—Tom Robertson and Society—A charitable effort—A joint-stock burleaque—The Forty Thiever—A diplomatic secretary—A Lyceum performance—The Queen and Prince Albert—Fantastic dancing—Another charitable effort—The Tempet burleaqued—Miss Kate Terry—Miss Woolgar—Mr. George Cruickshank—Mr. Frank Talfourd and the Savage Club—Theatre Royal, Manchester—The Forty Thieves—I represent Hassarac—Mr. William Agnew organises success—Liverpool follows—£1600 earned—Given to Dickens and Webster as trustees for Robert Brough's wife and two children—Mr. Lionel Brough goes on the stage—Mr. H. J. Byron becomes an actor and a manager—Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd.

THE Lyceum Theatre about 1856 witnessed the first appearance in London of a little lady who was destined to earn a leading position and to exercise a considerable and beneficial influence on the metropolitan stage. This was Miss Marie Wilton, who became eventually Mrs. Bancroft. The Lyceum was then under the management of Mr. Charles Dillon, who had created such an impression at Sadler's Wells in a play called Belphegor, adapted, of course, from the French, that John Oxenford wrote a long and rapturous criticism in the Times which, so to speak, made the actor. The Times had this exceptional power at that period. Belphegor was duly brought down from Pentonville Hill, and was performed in those days according to the West-end

custom, backed up by a short burlesque. The company included Mr. J. L. Toole, who laid at this theatre the foundations of his future career, Miss Marie Wilton, and an excellent "all round" company. Toole played the circus clown Fanfaronade, and Miss Wilton appeared as his boy attendant; both these clever people being associated in the burlesque, which finished the evening. Those who saw these performances were safe in predicting a brilliant future both for Mr. Toole and Miss Wilton; but Charles Dillon hardly fulfilled his early promise, and died with a reputation more diminished than increased.

Miss Wilton went from the Lyceum to the Strand Theatre, then under the management of the Swanboroughs, and aided by Mr. Henry J. Byron, whom she met for the first time, William Brough, Andrew Halliday, and others, who supplied the burlesque material, she made a reputation in this sometimes overabused and sometimes over-praised form of entertainment, which was never equalled by any other actress except Miss Ellen Farren. She had a strong sense of character, an obvious enjoyment of life, and (in the

theatre would fill half a volume to particularise, but I may mention one, The Maid and the Magpie, for a personal reason. I was a clever amateur step-dancer, and my studies had made me familiar with a "niggerdance," called the "Squash-Hollow Hornpipe," As a child I had seen James Rice, the original "Jim Crow" and burnt-cork comedian, at the old Adelphi, and when called upon in convivial circles, I could give a very fair imitation of this footlight celebrity; but my favourite dance was the "Squash-Hollow," a later effort of the burnt-cork school, but still a theatrical antique. I had preserved the tune, which I could play, after a fashion, on the piano, and at a stage rehearsal of The Maid and the Magpie I played the tune to Miss Wilton and taught her the dance. She was an apt pupil, and on the first night she delighted her amateur ballet-master by obtaining two or three encores. This was the first of the series of dances which became known as "cellar-flap breakdowns."

Miss Wilton was, in the highest sense of the word a "Variety Artist." Before she left the Strand she tried comedy with success, as she could hardly fail in anything she undertook; and at the old Adelphi she subsequently played in a short pantomime, in which she and Mary Keeley-Mrs. Keeley's daughter, who afterwards became Mrs. Albert Smith-represented harlequin and columbine d la Watteau. After this I found Miss Wilton at the St. James's Theatre, in a burlesque written by Henry J. Byron, on the subject of Boucicault's drama, Effie Deans, and here she was associated with, amongst others, her old playfellow Mr. James Rogers, or, as he was familiarly called, "Jemmy Rogers." Being on the Press I had a "face admission" to most theatres, and late one evening my footsteps wandered in the direction of Braham's old playhouse. I went into the stalls. The burlesque was half over; the

audience was not numerous, and an air of sadness pervaded the theatre. On the stage was a table, provided for Rogers to use in a "stump oration"-a music-hall "turn" then made very popular by a burnt-Miss Wilton cork comedian named Unsworth. and a male actor, whose name I forget, were on the stage, and so was Rogers preparing for his oration. He was dressed in a long black close-fitting alpaca dress representing the heroine "Effie." He staggered to the table, but was seized with a violent fit of coughing, and had to turn his back to the audience. His form was so wasted with consumption, and his dress was so thin, that the struggle with his lungs could almost be seen in action through the alpaca, like the working of machinery. Miss Wilton and her fellow actor looked serious and helpless. recovered sufficiently to turn round, and grasping the table, he leant over it to address the audience in the manner of Unsworth. From sheer exhaustion he slipped like a bundle of rags under the table. Miss Wilton and her companion stooped to pick him up, and.

him at Tavistock House, at dinner, and he invited me to dine with him at Walham Green the week afterwards—the hour being fixed at four o'clock, because of the "Show," as he called it, in Piccadilly. On the day appointed—a summer's day—I walked to Walham Green, and rang the bell as the clock at the square-towered church was striking four. Mrs. Keeley, his mother-in-law, met me in the hall and was astonished I had not heard the news. Albert had been seized with an epileptic fit that very morning; two doctors were with him, and a physician had been sent for. He was allowed to see no one but the doctors. I turned away and walked back to London. A few days brought the news of his death and funeral.

Albert Smith was a shrewd, clever writer, whose novels were admirable mixtures of Bulwer and Dickens—very readable—and whose little "Social" handbooks, published by Bogue, of Fleet Street, such as "The Gent," "The Ballet Girl," etc., were in the hands of every run-and-read book-buyer. As the inventor of an entertainment combining literary description, character sketches, patter songs, and other amusing patchwork, delivered by himself, with pictorial illustrations by eminent artists, he is entitled to honourable remembrance. He was the first "enter-tainer" to abolish "fees" and make his audience comfortable. He wrote to the *Times* about "hotel charges," and succeeded in getting servants' "fees" charged in the bills; but this, in practice, has been of little service to the public. The fees are still charged in the bills, and go into the pockets of the landlord or the great limited company, but the servants expect to get their "tips" as before, and echo cries, cui bono?

Albert Smith was an accomplished showman, and Arthur Smith, his brother, was a model "acting manager." If he had lived he would have gone to America with Charles Dickens, when the great author

started as a reader, but Arthur being dead, George Dolby was selected in his place. Arthur knew all the tricks of the trade as well as Barnum. He delayed opening the doors of the "Egyptian Hall" every night for five minutes and blocked the traffic in Piccadilly. When complaints were made, he expressed his willingness to pay fifty pounds for another five minutes' obstruction. Barnum once showed a similar spirit. When he took Jenny Lind to New York he hung huge canvas advertisements like viaducts from one side of Broadway to the other. He was summoned. "What is the penalty?" he asked. "Five hundred dollars a day for each obstruction." "No imprisonment?" "Nothing but the fines." "I'll take ten more at the same price," promptly replied the showman.

In the first amateur pantomime got up by Albert Smith for a charity, Arthur played pantaloon, and when my turn came to play the same character at the Lyceum for the benefit of Joe Robins, the amateur clown of the first pantomime who had taken to the

Grimaldi "business," and was nervous about all these modern innovations. The rope—represented by a narrow plank, the edge painted like a rope—was pitched rather high, and the stage was opened below

rather deep, and spread with mattresses.

When the time came for the "spill" Robins was timid, and I had to wriggle out of the barrow as quickly as possible and drop into the abyss. I dropped, but the barrow, owing to Robins's demorali-sation, followed me, fortunately falling clear of my head, to the delight of the workmen down in what I called the Gulf of Carpentaria. I had yet one more "sensation" to accomplish. I stood on a thirty-six gallon cask, moving it along by the action of my feet from one side of the stage to the other, throwing up three oranges at the same time—like the Egyptian in the fresco seen and noted by Belzoni, the circus-man and traveller, in the Great Pyramid. This "tub-running" was the father of the Ethardo "globe-running." I had seen it as a boy at a nameless "gaff," and had become an expert by the kind permission of many brewers' draymen. All this was known to me, and much more, but not to the old and experienced musician who played the drum in the opposite corner of the orchestra—the corner overlooked by that side of the stage where I had to turn my barrel before I re-crossed to my starting-point. When I turned, and appeared to be coming down to the gaping orchestra, the nervous drummer threw down his sticks and fairly bolted under the stage.

His action amused the audience, and when he explained the cause of it afterwards, it was difficult to blame him. "He didn't hold with amateurs, even when they played Hamlet; but when they turned mountebanks, they might break their own necks with pleasure; but he should always take jolly good care that they didn't break kis!"

Much that was done in amateur acting in the cause of charity at this time had its origin in the "Savage Club"-a more or less fortuitous concourse of artistic atoms, that, as far as its local habitations then were concerned, was little more than a glorified tap-room. While the "Reunion" in Maiden Lane, Covent Garden, was a night club, chiefly supported by the middle-aged respectabilities of literature, science, and art, and while the "Urban," held at St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell, in the room where Cave published the Gentleman's Magazine in the last century, and Doctor Johnson was said to have had his dinner served to him behind a screen, because his coat was too shabby for the public room, was a temple chiefly devoted to Shakespeare worship—the "Savage Club" was a day and evening club-peripatetic from necessity rather than from choice, moving from pot-house to pot-house when landlords discovered that they could use their "long rooms" for a more profitable purpose than as a house of call for lower Bohemia. Tom Robertson, a member, selected the club for a scene in Society.

that period, with very little chance of developing into

a butterfly.

While it was occupying lodgings on the first floor of the Lyceum Tavern in the Strand, under a liberal landlord, who served the best three-pennyworth of gin-and-water in London, a death occurred in the literary family, leaving the usual number of children. The author was well known and respected, but there is no occasion to mention his name. Mr. Disraeli with his usual liberality to his craft sent ten guineas —at a time, probably, when he could ill afford it. few other subscriptions came in, but not to an encouraging extent, and at last it was decided to take the Lyceum Theatre—a theatre at that time very easily taken—and to give a grand composite performance. Nearly all the living burlesque writers clubbed their brains together and produced a patchwork comic version of the immortal "Forty Thieves," which bore the names of Robert Brough, Henry J. Byron, Frank Talfourd, William Brough, Leicester Buckingham, Andrew Halliday, and others. The authors cast themselves for the leading parts, and a dozen of us volunteered to act as supers, or characters with a few lines. The theatre was secured from Madame Celeste, and the scheme was paragraphed in every possible way at the smallest possible cost. The tickets were soon in demand, and it was evident the patchwork was going to be a financial success. The business arrangements were in the hands of Mr. Lawrence. the honorary secretary, who was quite equal to any emergency. One day about two o'clock there was a flutter in the lower bar of the tavern, as two gentlemen, who were evidently not connected with the writserving branch of the law, were asking to be directed to a club called the "Savage," which claimed the same number in the Strand as the Lyceum Tavern. An intelligent potboy had the presence of mind to

show the gentlemen up a side flight of stairs and usher them into the club-room, where Mr. Lawrence was writing letters, surrounded by one or two exhausted tumblers, several pint pots, certain tobacco pipes, and a half-finished "screw" of bird's-eye. The gentlemen were polite and courtly, but suggested that some mistake had been made. Mr. Lawrence was equally polite, and assured them that they were in the "Savage Club," which was quite at their service. As he said this, he played with benefit tickets of various denominations, as if he was about to suggest a game of baccarat. The elder of the two gentlemen came to the point, and after announcing himself as Colonel Ponsonby, said that Her Majesty Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort had expressed a wish to witness the entertainment, and as the Lyceum was not a theatre with which they were very familiar, he had been sent on to see if there was a royal box, and if arrangements could be made for the reception of Royalty. Lawrence behaved in a way that entitled him to a knighthood. Mr. Micawber and Colonel

thing a little over nine pounds, the royal box was made presentable. Those were not the days and nights of theatrical luxury, and everybody was satisfied.

The Savage Club, beamed upon for the first time by royalty, did not lose its head, thanks to Mr. Lawrence, but it thought that every care ought to be exercised to keep the box opposite the royal box—Mr. Arnold's private box, which he had kindly given to the Club for that night, before he knew the Queen was coming—free from any improper characters. Every care was taken, but in spite of this, when the curtain rose on the great concrete burlesque, that box, facing the Queen and Prince Albert, was occupied by the most notorious courtesan in London. Bond Street and aristocratic influence had been too much for the poor untutored Savages, including the active and clever Mr. Lawrence.

The performance commenced, the house being crammed in every part. In concert with another "Savage," whose brains at that time, like mine, were largely represented by his legs, we made up for our want of dialogue by an excess of pantomimic action. Seizing the front prompt corner of the stage, right opposite the royal box, we executed such a wild and fantastic dance in the cavern scene that we rather disconcerted our friends the principals, and flattered ourselves that we had made a great impression on the two illustrious persons to whom we played, rather ignoring the brilliant general audience than otherwise.

The financial result of the entertainment was most satisfactory, and it encouraged the Savage Club to make further efforts. On Robert Brough's lamented death, which occurred shortly afterwards, another joint-stock burlesque was written on the subject of the *Tempest*, and this was performed for the benefit of his wife and family at Drury Lane Theatre, practically

by the same company. We had the great advantage of Miss Kate Terry's (Mrs. Arthur Lewis's) valuable assistance in the part of Ariel, and Miss Woolgar (Mrs. Alfred Mellon) as Prince Ferdinand. I was promoted on this occasion, and was entrusted with the responsible part of Trinculo, the drunken sailor, my companion ruffian being Mr. George Cruickshank. The Caliban was Mr. Frank Talfourd.

The success of our performances—not hidden under a bushel, I need scarcely say, by those of us who were journalists-produced the offer of an appearance at the Theatre Royal, Manchester, and a promise of the most influential local support. This promise was more than kept by Mr. William Agnew, then a most energetic young man, and, as business manager of the performance, I attribute our triumph quite as much to his power of organisation as to our own transcendental The piece was our Lyceum Forty Thieves, and I was allowed to represent the meledramatic lieutenant. Hassarac. The other characters were distributed much as before, Mr. Lionel Brough playing the part of Ganem. He was no longer the ungainly harlequin,

Noon Talfourd. Sir Thomas was an intimate friend of Lamb and Dickens, and the author of *Ion*, and one or two poetical dramas. Frank Talfourd was a singularly handsome young man, very refined in manner, and much more poetical looking than his father. He was a clever and graceful burlesque writer, and, without being a Bohemian, lived an irregular life of eating and sleeping that certainly undermined his health. He dined when most people were in bed, and when many were thinking of getting up, and though temperate in his habits as regards drinking, he was intemperate in this particular. He was a thorough gentleman.

The net result of these performances, adding one at Liverpool, was about sixteen hundred pounds, of which nearly a thousand pounds came from Manchester. Frank Talfourd and myself were treasurers, but we prevailed upon Charles Dickens and Benjamin Webster to accept the money as trustees, and dispose of it as they thought best for Robert Brough's widow,

his daughter Fanny, and his son Robert.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Arundel Club—A Haymarket literary benefit performance—A cocoa-nut dance—The Cornhill Magazine—Thackeray—An editor and a man of business—His clubs—His habits—His method of working—"Evans's"—"Paddy" Green—Turned out—Cyder Cellars—"Sam Hall"—Mr. Early Schopenhauer—History—Thackeray as an artist—His opinion—His tolerance—His secretary—Stucco—Queen Anne style before the revival—A search for a house—Bogies.

THE tap-room character of the Savage Club was distasteful to a few of the members, and perhaps to many more who had not the energy to alter it. One night three of us set out from the Lyceum Tavern—Frank Talfourd, Crawford Wilson, and myself—to find a new place of rest, and perhaps to found a new club. We discovered agreeable quarters at the Arundel Hotel, at the bottom of Arundel Street, Strand, and the Arundel Club was soon started. I was not long connected with it as a member, although, in its new house in Salisbury Street. I was a frequent

as a black man in a burlesque of Robinson Crusoe, I initiated, directed, and took part in a cocoa-nut dance which I had once seen outside Richardson's booth at Bartlemy Fair. The dance was well received, as they say, but the cocoa-nut shells, strapped on the hands, elbows, and knees, had a nasty habit of breaking their straps and shooting out amongst the audience.

At the commencement of the sixties Mr. Thackeray, by the enterprise of Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co., was induced to emerge from his literary retirement, and to become an editor and a man of business. The Cornhill Magasine was started—the most ambitious effort ever made to establish a good shilling magazine. Its predecessors had been Mr. Edmund Yates' Train, which was conducted, as I have before said, on co-operative principles, and Douglas Jerrold's bantling, which called itself a shilling production. The Cornhill, under Mr. George Smith's energetic and liberal guidance, wanted nothing that capital and courage could give it.

Mr. Thackeray had not the trading instinct of Charles Dickens. His habits were those of a gentleman of fortune. He was fond of clubs and leisure, of books, of pictures, and of continental cities. In his early life he had been half a Parisian. He loved France, and when he felt inclined to give himself a holiday of a few days, he liked nothing better than to drop over to Calais, to wander without any design, except perhaps a fondness for walking in the footsteps of Sterne. The old-world town of Montreuil. famous for its fortifications built by Vauban to defy the universe, and its flavour of "Tristram Shandy," was one of his favourites, before the Shakespeare of France, Victor Hugo, had immortalised it in "Les Misérables," and blotted out the memory of Eugene Sue's once madly popular "Mysteries of Paris" in true Shakesperian fashion. The Franco-Spanish town of Arras, the monastic St. Omer, old Lille-before it became a brutal mixture of Birmingham, Manchester, and Sheffield-were all his resting-places for a day or two, time after time, and everything they possessed in literature, art, and archæology were known to the tall, long-legged, spectacled, and ruminating author of the greatest analytical novel in the English language. Passing in a so-called express train to Paris, I once saw him standing undecided on the little platform of the Pont de Bricques station, evidently waiting for some train that stopped every-He was not a pushing, driving man. He was an observant writer, but, unlike Dickens, he was not so receptive of external impressions. He laid one of the many pathetic scenes in "The Newcomes" on the old ramparts of Boulogne, and he loved a retiring hotel at Calais, kept by an old lady who ushered in every guest in the old grand style, dressed in black silk and carrying wax-lights, simply because it was called the Hotel Dessein. He knew-no one knew better—that the original Hotel Dessein of the

hour, and move, later in the day, to the old Garrick Club in King Street, Covent Garden, where, if the whim seized him, or he was not seduced by the amusing conversation of his friends, he would get into any corner, and, taking out his precious bundle, would carry his fancy a little further. The old Garrick, I imagine, was his favourite club—the place he visited most in the evening. The new Garrick in Garrick Street—the same club, but a new building—was not completed till after his sudden and lamented death. He had the honour of being rejected at the Travellers, and the ruling majority gave as a reason that they were afraid of seeing themselves in some novel of the future.

If the Garrick was his favourite club, its neighbour, "Evans's" Singing-Room, in Covent Garden, was his favourite resort. Thackeray had a small following at the Garrick, and heading these, night after night, he made the underground singing-saloon-which had sat to him with the "Coal Hole" and the "Cyder Cellars" for the portrait of the "Cave of Harmony" —the most popular smoking-room of the club. The choir of boy choristers, who were surpliced in the day at a great Reman Catholic church, and sang in evening dress at night in an atmosphere of baked potatoes, devilled kidneys, mutton chops, gin, beer, and tobacco, were special favourites with the great author. He suffered from a painful internal disease, and the music relieved him. The glees of Bishop, Purcell, Niedermeyer, Pearsall, and others, had always justice done to them by the boys and their grown-up companions, accompanied by a piano and harmonium. The presiding genius—the host and proprietor—was a well-known London character called "Paddy" Green, who in his younger days had been a chorister at the Opera House. He was a ruddy, cheery, affable, prosy, middle-aged gentleman, with a face the colour

of a tomato, and a big snuff-box which he offered to everybody. The saloon was liberally decorated with oil-paintings, some few of them good, and many They were supposed to be a homomerely rubbish. geneous collection of theatrical portraits, but I have a strong suspicion that they were collected hap-hazard, and arbitrarily labelled with the names of old actors and actresses. I fancy I recognised in King, the comedian and original representative of Sir Peter Teazle (whose crutch stick, by the way, I gave to Mr. Henry Irving), a counterfeit presentment of the Hon. Stuart Wortley, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's husband; and in Philip Astley, the equestrian manager, I sometimes saw the face and clothing of Charles Lamb, or a dissenting minister of the period.

Like Thackeray, I had a strong personal affection for the place, but for a different reason. When I was a boy, about fourteen, adorned with a large Eton collar, I got in one night, or rather early one morning, with my faithful companion, Moy Thomas, who is my own age within a month or two. The place then was less than half its present size being confined to the

attack upon them in his description of the "Cave of Harmony." One cause of this was the fact that ladies were not admitted. I was turned out with another boy by a chartered ruffian at the door named "Skinner," whose language was quite in harmony with the place, and whose insolence was punished one night with a blow that marked him for life. These were the manners of the time. Nothing daunted by our expulsion, we found refuge in another harmonious sewer -the Cyder Cellars in Maiden Lane, at the back of the old Adelphi Theatre. Here the entertainment was of the same kind, and we were just in time (about 2 A.M.) to hear the song of the evening, which was then the song of the hour and the hallelujah of the town. It was called "Sam Hall," and the singer was an Anglo-Irish comedian of considerable power, named Ross. His chant was that of a chimney-sweep on the day before he was to be hanged for murder. was a defiant, blasphemous chimney-sweep—a coarse agnostic—with a determination to father his crimes on those who made him. Without knowing it, he was anticipating a Schopenhauer philosophy which was then in the womb of time, but to be born before the singer ended his days, under my management as a chorus-singer, at the Gaicty Theatre. astride upon a chair, leaning over the back, with his face glaring at the audience. He told his hearers how he had lived, if not exactly fattened, upon crime; how he had robbed both great and small, and at the end of each verse he damned his own eyes until this very straightforward phrase became the catchword and refrain of the convivial early morning. Mr. Ross, unlicensed as he was, and subjected to no court or magisterial censor, was neither better nor worse than his age, as some years afterwards I told my friend, Mr. Pigott, the licenser of plays, when I nearly arranged for Ross to give us a private taste of his old quality.

Thackeray's liking for Evans's was more cultivated than mine, and based upon his passionate love for the last century. Evans's belonged to the seventeenth nearly as much as it belonged to the eighteenth cen-It was the connecting link between the old Covent Garden coffee-houses-the Wills and Buttons -and the music-halls of the present. As a mansion it dates back to William the Third's time, and has a carved staircase of 1691, which cannot be matched in England. Its most celebrated resident perhaps was Admiral Lord Orford, who defeated the French at La Hogue, and who had the Convent Garden, not then a market, in front of him, and a view of the Highgate and Hampstead hills, across the foot of his garden, behind him. On the terrace, still existing, when he came out to bask in the southern sun in the morning, he often found a deserted child, rolled up as a bundle. on his doorstep. He was quite equal to the occasion. He sent all these children to the parish to be maintained by the rates, but gave them the generic name of Piazza, leaving the Christian prefix to the taste of

Dickens, but what I saw impressed me with his gentleness and charity. Far from being a cynic, he was more like a great good-natured schoolboy. never spoke to me about his literary work, but he once alluded to his illustrations: "I am not a firstrate artist," he said, "that I know, but I'm not half as bad as those fellows, the woodcutters, make me." I saw him enjoying himself one night at Drury Lane, seeing a gunpowder piece by Boucicault, called The Siege of Lucknow, which he could have criticised severely if he had felt so disposed; and on another day I was walking with him through the Industrial Exhibition of 1862 (with which I was officially and journalistically connected), where I noticed, or fancied I noticed, that he did not speak to Disraeli, nor Disraeli to him, although they must have seen each other passing through the building. He corrected me kindly, but without patronage or pedantry, on many points on which I was woefully ignorant, and particularly in my misapprehension of a Russian poster, the alphabet of which at that time was to me a jumble of unknown symbols. He had a somewhat comic Irish secretary, the very antithesis of his employer, who had acted partially in the same capacity for Thomas Carlyle, and who told me that, in casual conversation, the Chelsea philosopher had approved of my actuality papers in *Household Words* in preference to many of what he called "Dickens's Word-Spinnings." The secretary, I have reason to believe, had some little faith in me, and when with a boy or two and a pound or two, he tried to start an advanced paper in Birmingham, he secured my adhesion as "Our Own Special London Correspondent." I cannot say in this particular that he made an unpractical choice; for, although I was ignorant of many things, particularly the Russian language, I knew and still know every house and street in what dear old Morning Advertiser Grant called "The Great

Metropolis."

Knowing Thackeray's weakness for the Queen Anne period, I am afraid I played upon it. I was one morning in Thackeray's study in Onslow Square -a large room made by throwing two apartments into one. The wild Irish secretary (Thackeray always had a sneaking kindness for the Irish) was writing at one table near a window, and Thackeray was taking a short rest on an iron truckle bedstead-a regular Duke of Wellington's tent bedstead-which, with no beastly luxury in hangings and other frippery, was placed against a wall in the back-room, or alcove. held forth upon the "stucco" style of English domestic architecture, with its porticoes like four-post bedsteads, its dull regularity, every house like every other house, every dining-room like every other dining-room, so that when one dinner was being served, a dozen other similar dinners were being served at the same time in the same manner. It was not a case of only one party in a parlour-all silent, and all damned, but of a dozen parties all alike, and all cursed with the

with me and explore the neighbourhood, which he doubtless knew better than I did. The walk was not far, and we were not bothered by gaping heroworshippers. Thackeray was not as well advertised and as widely known as a portrait celebrity as Dickens. We found a large neglected empty house near the centre of the Walk, either nearing the expiration of its lease or waiting for a repairing angel-tenant to take it. The period was all right, but it was a decayed The staircase, the oak panels, the long, small-paned windows, the lofty ceilings, the iron work worthy of Seville, the over-doors, and all the wellknown Queen Anne classic features were there, but worm-eaten with neglect. It might have been a house, like many of its family in various parts of London, neglected and despised, and allowed to be let out in tenements as anything but a model lodginghouse. The garden was a yard, with damp stones covered with moss, black in some parts, and a poisonous green in others; the furrowed red-brick south wall, instead of being covered with ripe plums, was draped with sooty, rotten ivy, and the care-taker had stretched an old knotted clothes-line across the yard, which gave a dash of modern poverty to the signs of ancient decay. The place was a cross between a quadrangle of Haddon Hall, and the back premises of a house of pretension that had "seen better days." The great historian of the "shabby genteel" shuddered. The place, he said, suggested murders, suicides. and crimes of violence. My "find" was an admitted failure, but I am afraid it had its effect, or rather the flippant arguments had, with which I led up to it. Shortly afterwards Thackeray built himself a spickand-span new modern antique Queen Anne mansion in Kensington Palace Gardens, in which he spent much of his hard-earned money and the short remainder of his valuable life.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Cornhill starts—"Scholars and gentlemen"—Style—"Cheek,"
the child of bashfulness—The staff—The dinner—Old friends—
"Regular cabs"—"A contributor of all work"—"Gentlemen's
own materials made up"—The Morning Post—"London Horrors"
—More mouths than loaves—"Our Special Commissioner"—
"Ragged London in 1861"—Malthus—Signed articles—The
Welcome Guest—The Leader—F. G. Tomlins—Our club jester—
An article born before its time—Herbert Spencer—Charles Mackay
—The London Review—A lost article.

THE Cornhill Magazine was started, Mr. George Smith taking charge of the business arrangements to allow Mr. Thackeray a free hand for editorship. It was avowedly to be written by scholars and gentlemen. The staff were collected from the four corners of the world of literature and journalism. An honest attempt was made to discover or invent "new blood," but it could not be pronounced a success. The scholars

of Good Hope, and the duty of knowing all parts of the city we live in, neither unduly admiring one part nor exhibiting a false aristocratic contempt for another. I mentioned Stoke Newington, where Defoe died, and was not surprised to find that Thackeray's topographical knowledge was governed by people more than places. After a little conversation he found that my connection with any college, except the everlasting streets, had no existence. I was frankly brutal, and brutally frank, and might have been a Brummagem Carlyle in the way I addressed my future (No. 2) editor.

"You write a very pure style," said Thackeray,

"may I ask where you learnt it?"

"Mostly, I am afraid, in the streets," I replied rather impudently: "from costermongers and skittlesharps. My model may have been the first chapter of Genesis, which is composed chiefly, if I remember rightly, of words of one syllable; anyway I rarely use long words, because I am not sure I always understand their meaning, and sometimes there might be a difficulty about the spelling." This was hardly diplomatic language from a young contributor to a great and able editor, but Thackeray was incapable of taking offence where none was meant. Speaking to his wild Irish secretary afterwards, I believe he put it down to my constitutional nervousness and excitement. He was quite right. "Cheek" is often the offspring of bashfulness.

The staff was completed, and on a given night we were all invited to an opening dinner—a sumptuous repast given by Mr. George Smith. Mr. Smith, at that time, lived in Gloucester Place, Hyde Park—one of the many bewildering "Gloucesters" that bother the alien and the stranger in London. The house was the one in which the fraudulent banker, Sadleir, had lived, and the dining-room was the one from which

he sallied forth early one morning with a silver creamjug and poisoned himself on Hampstead Heath. family doctor killed himself in the same way near the

same place about twenty years afterwards.

When we scholars and gentlemen were announced, one after the other, and entered the drawing-room. after shaking hands with Mr. Thackeray and Mr. Smith, it was "Halloa, Jack," "Halloa, George," "Halloa, Bill," and "Halloa, Dick, Tom, and Harry !" We were all known to each other-were all representatives of the same market. One or two new comers were visible, like General Burgoyne (since dead) and Captain Allen Young (now Sir Allen Young), then just returned from the Arctic regions in an abortive attempt to discover the remains of Sir John Franklin. The rank and file, however, were the good old rank and file; the experts, the craftsmen who had learnt the trick of the trade, or were born with pens, ink and paper in their mouths. Thackeray at once realised the situation, and, as the Americans say, immediately owned up to it. Standing with his tall, erect form on the hearthrug, and with a merry

of the "History of the Afghan War"), Maskelyne (son of the Astronomer Royal). Allen (of the Trinity House), Thompson (surgeon), Captain Young (Arctic voyager), and Sir Charles Taylor, asked probably as a friend of Thackeray's. Sir John Bowring, Mrs. Gaskell, and R. Monckton Milnes, M.P. (Lord Houghton), were asked, but were not present.

My contributions to the new magazine during the year that followed were not of much value, though they doubtless furnished acceptable "padding." think I put one new political phrase upon the market -" The Parochial Mind"—in an article bearing that title. I was able to make myself useful to my editor and proprietor. Late one evening a message came from Thackeray to know if I would write up to certain pictures drawn for them by a celebrated artist who had supplied his own letterpress. The letterpress, I presume, was not exactly what the able editor wanted, and as an acknowledged "man of all work" I was called off the stand. I was left to choose my first blocks, but they wanted the job done by the following morning. I told Thackeray that the commission reminded me of the legend in the small tailors' windows-" Gentlemen's Own Materials made up," but I promised to be ready. I had, at any rate, the merit of punctuality. I selected several blocks supposed to represent work and character, day and night, in Covent Garden Market; and instead of going to bed I spent the night amongst the porters, loafers, coffee-stalls, and market carts of our great vegetable exchange. An old porter was telling stories of his early poaching days, using a broomstick to represent a gun; and the coffee-stall was selling gin under the name of "physic." We were a social party. In the early morning I saw the wholesale and retail process > —the buying in at one price and the selling out at another—which takes place in all the great centres of

"higgling" and supply. By noon the same day I had written round the pictures. My employers were satisfied, and when the magazine was published a considerable slice of the description was quoted in

the Times newspaper.

Soon after this I was sent for by Mr. Algernon Borthwick (now Sir Algernon Borthwick, Bart., M.P.), the editor-in-chief and manager of the Morning Post. One of those gluts of labour—the curse of great cities—had occurred at the East-end of London. The pressure was greater and more acute than usual, and the "Famine of 1861" was the consequence. I was asked to act as the "Special Commissioner" of the paper, to investigate and report, from day to day, upon this metropolitan trouble. I accepted the task, and early on a Sunday morning, armed with letters principally to local clergymen, I began my melancholy work. For a whole fortnight I walked about all day, and wrote all night, sleeping from four to seven a.m., between the completion of one report and the preparation for another. My

lysed. How many sank it is impossible to say, as the records of London misery are never reliable. There is a determination on the part of those in authority to rake dictionaries for words, instead of using the one and right word—starvation. If I had possessed a million of money I should have given it away—perhaps unwisely—and allowed my sentiment to have overcome my judgment. I finished my task in about a fortnight, perhaps the saddest task that ever fell to the lot of a "special." I collected the papers, and Messrs. Smith and Elder published them under the title of "Ragged London in 1861." In the preface I said what I really thought: "A little less drunken indulgence in marriage and child-breeding will at once better the condition of these miserable people, as the Reverend Mr. Malthus told them long ago."

The Welcome Guest—a journal laid down on the Household Words lines—one of the many imitators of Dickens's magazine productions—claimed a little attention at this time from the "regular cabs" and others. The inducement was not only the pay, which was small but punctual, but the fact that the writers were allowed to sign their articles. It was a common complaint, not without foundation, that all the good things in Household Words were credited to Dickens, and most of the good things in the Cornhill were credited to Thackeray. The anonymous on the press was strictly guarded and preserved, and it was left for Dr. W. H. Russell, by his commanding talent, to be the first to break through this fog-bound barrier.

A weekly paper called the *Leader*, which had been edited by G. H. Lewes, came at this period under the control of Mr. F. G. Tomlins, a bright, cheerful little man, who cultivated literature on a City clerkship. Comfortably installed within the old walls of the Painter-Stainers Company—the parent of Royal Academies and Industrial Exhibitions—situated in

Little Trinity Lane-one of the numerous lanes in the City which were somewhat freely baptised regardless of religious feelings-he was a welcome member of every artistic convivial club in London. He was the recognised jester in all these social circles, though his jests were often as difficult of comprehension as Touchstone's or Dick Tarleton's. He had the history of the drama from its earliest days at his fingers' ends, and knew the modern drama and modern actors only too well. He was a bundle of humorous prejudices, often acting a part, which he did not really feel, for the amusement of his companions. Of course he had written several plays, and one, called the Noble Error, he rechristened, not without justice, the Infernal Mistake. He could take jokes as well as make them-a very valuable quality in a tavern roysterer. He lived two lives-one convivial and the other official. In the office of his company, posting books, reading minutes, and writing letters, he was as severe as Benjamin Franklin in his hours of business: outside Little Trinity Lane, as, amongst other things,

American magazine (the *Broadway*), published by the Messrs. Routledge, called "Dramatic Critics Criticised," in which I told the world what it already knew only too well—the names of the gentlemen who wrote the dramatic notices. Personal and society journalists in 1894 would never believe the stir this innocent paper made in the middle of the sixties.

I wrote a good deal for my friend Mr. Tomlins in the *Leader*, and one day was introduced by Mr. Pigott to Mr. Herbert Spencer. The philosopher was polite, and I, feeling that I ought to say something, attempted to discuss the doctrine of free will in the dingy back office. I should not have been astonished if he had said, "Bosh! come out and have a drink," because that was the way in which metaphysical subjects were dealt with in the editorial sanctum.

The London Review was another weekly journal at this time, edited by Mr. Charles Mackay, the songwriter, which claimed my services and got them. I wrote on all things and many others—a good deal on the drama. One article on "Comic Songs," sent to this paper, may have been published in another world, for it never saw the light in this. It was irretrievably lost in the post—the only paper I ever lost out of a cartload of manuscripts.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The second World's Fair—The Royal Family—Domestic life—Prince Albert—Lord Palmerston—Prince Albert's death—"South Kensington"—"Cole, C.B."—Historical introductions—Marlborough House—The "Chamber of Horrors"—The Daily News—"Perquisites."

THE year 1862 was distinguished by the opening of the second great International Exhibition—the successor to the exhibition of 1851, generally known as the "World's Fair." The Prince Consort, Prince Albert, deserves all the credit claimed for him as the inventor of these industrial fairs and competitive trading displays; but those who have seen the great annual fair at Nishni-Novgorod in Russia, on the Volga, which dates back for several centuries, will see that Prince Albert need not have evolved his idea out

English boys and girls. Such care and common-sense on the part of a prince who came here with German feelings, German education, and probably German prejudices, more than atone for several injudicious attempts to interfere with foreign politics, which prompted Lord Palmerston to speak severely about the "power behind the Throne." The domestic spirit which animated and still animates the royal circle was doubtless largely the creation of the Prince Consort, and it has preserved the Throne from attacks, even in the most critical days of political excitement. Prince Albert unfortunately never lived to see the opening of the second Great Exhibition, which he did much, as usual, to organise, and was perhaps spared the pain of being partially disillusionised. The poetry of 1851 was wanting in 1862; the trading element was more apparent at the expense of art—in fact, the Exhibition had the inevitable tone of a forced "revival." Prince Albert died in 1861. What I wrote then I am not ashamed to quote now:-

The opening of this Temple of Industry will teach many of us, if we need teaching, that the great scheme of creation never stands still.

Many youths will have risen into manhood since 1851, many ripe men will have shrunk into old age, and many honoured and once familiar faces will have vanished from the crowd. We shall look in vain for one kingly presence—the keystone of the ceremony—and shall be reminded with much sorrow but with more hope that we are raising a monument to his memory. When the master dies the ship is not left a spectral hulk upon the stocks; she is launched to carry his name into the remotest corners of the earth.

We cannot easily overrate the courage and intellectual originality of a Prince who has taught thousands that there is no wisdom in despising the followers of trade. He did nothing to soil his Royal dignity when he shook hands with commerce, and pointed out to Art-industry the road it should take. He guided his private conduct by the highest

acourages itself."

We mourn his loss, but only in a selfish spirit, and envy him his end, dying in the lap of his peaceful victories, in the full glory of a spotless and consistent life.

These words formed a postscript note inserted in the Historical Introduction to the Catalogue of 1862—a task entrusted to me by Sir Wentworth Dilke, and ratified by his brother commissioners. These commissioners were:—

The Earl of Granville, the Duke of Buckingham, Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, Thomas Baring, Esq., M.P., and Thomas Fairbairn, Esq. The secretary was Mr. F. R. Sandford.

The historical introduction to the catalogue of 1851 was written by "Cole, C. B."—afterwards Sir Charles Cole—the remarkable man who built, managed, and persuaded successive Governments to finance the nests of Science and Art at South Kensington. Everything in those days was coaxed, dragged, or lured to that favoured district. Market gardens disappeared in the night as if by magic, and galleries and museums descended like Aladdin's palace to take their place. Many people who were "in the know" of course benefited, but the public were allowed to participate in the benefit. The movement was essen-

perfect stroke of genius. "Cole, C. B." was that genius, and as such deserves to be fully honoured.

My official connection with the Exhibition of 1862 led to my being engaged as special correspondent of the Daily News. While the building was being erected under the direction of Captain Fowke, C.E., and by Messrs. Kelk and Lucas, the contractors, I saw its progress day by day, and, sharing the general opinion, was not struck by its beauty. It was not like the building of 1851—a novelty, a creation—it was a well-designed, somewhat common-place warehouse. The usual deaths by accident amongst the workmen occurred, sufficient to justify the dictum of M. Eissel, the constructor of the Eissel Tower in Paris, that in works of this or a similar kind one life must be sacrificed for every £40,000 expended in labour and material. When the Exhibition was over, tremendous efforts were made by an interested ring to maintain the building on the ground—the ground where the Museum of Natural History now stands in the Cromwell Road. The Queen's name was used as being favourable to the scheme, and Mr. Gladstone was even induced to exert his great influence with the House of Commons, but though the majority in the press was on the side of Mr. Gladstone, the demolition or removal was decided upon by a sufficient majority. I was on the winning side—not only as a writer, for in these cases writing is not everything, but as a lobbyist. The building was ultimately removed to Alexandra Park, where about ten years afterwards it was destroyed by fire. The 1851 building became the "Crystal Palace" at Sydenham.

During the run of the Exhibition I had to engage a number of special reporters to write upon departments they knew something about, as I never posed as an encyclopædic genius. I edited and reported general matters for the Daily News, and made my first

appearance as a draughtsman in the Daily Telegraph by drawing a ground plan of the building and the arrangement of the exhibits, which appeared neck and neck on the opening day with one in the Times, given to Mr. "Nick" Woods by the contractors. This opening, owing to the lamented death of the Prince Consort, was naturally shorn of much of its

pomp and splendour.

As a reporter and an official I received a few presents, which were generally of such a character that I could accept them without pandering too much to the genius loci. A young son of mine, named John Edward (who is still alive), broke his leg in jumping off a garden seat, and a good Samaritan lent me a large musical-box to amuse him while his leg was re-setting. Another good Samaritan, who presided over the Italian section, gave me all the samples of Italian wine that had been exhibited and boiled several times during the duration of the Exhibition. Out of a hundred bottles about ten were drinkable and the attempt on the part of Italy to compete with

CHAPTER XIX.

Dr. Norman Macleod—Good Words—Alexander Strahan—W. Isbister
—A big, fine, manly editor—A missionary who could have gone
anywhere and converted anybody to anything—Excommunication
—"Worldly writers"—Legalised robbery—A test case—Noctes—
Student days—Lady Faucit as Lady Macbeth—A private box—An
"Albion" supper—A national statue—Dramatic criticism—
Dramatic reporting—Edmund Yates retires—I step into his chair
—Long miscellaneous training—Punck—Oonak—Sir John Robinson—His kindness—Westland Marston—Readings—Thackeray's
lectures—Yates and Power's entertainment.

ABOUT this time I was introduced to my third editor—that is to say, my third editor of importance. First it was Dickens, then it was Thackeray, and now it was Dr. Norman Macleod, the literary conductor of Good Words.

Dr. Macleod was a big, fine, manly editor, with all the best qualities of the Scotch character. He was more like the conventional idea of an Irishman than a Scotchman; the fact being that these national characteristics, all the world over, are based upon preconceived ideas, and not upon actual and intelligent observation, and are utterly fallacious. In any position Dr. Macleod would have been a leader of men; he was as full of human sympathy as a Wardour Street shop is full of furniture. There was nothing of the bagpipes and the conventicle about him. He would have made an excellent missionary, capable of going anywhere and converting anybody to anything. He would have made a good general, a good admiral, a good store-keeper, a good railway chairman, or that highest ambition of the American mind—a good hotel-manager. Whether he selected Mr. Alexander

Strahan, the publisher of Good Words, or Mr. Alexander Strahan selected him, the combination was a happy one. Mr. Strahan was a liberal paymaster, a pleasant companion, and a sympathetic business editor. He had only one fault, which was common to both of us-we possessed the diseased activity of the parched pea in the frying-pan. We were bound to keep moving even if we moved in the wrong direction. There are many like us who are afflicted with the same disease, which I call the Plica Napoleonica. Nothing will cure it; not even a Moscow. Macleod, with his generous views, practical but not obtrusive piety, and sound common-sense, was our salvation as a brake, and our trust as ballast. In this he was aided by Mr. Strahan's genial partner, Mr. Isbister.

There was no resisting the social qualities of Dr. Macleod, and I was the last to attempt any such resistance. I possessed social qualities myself, and was always ready to meet them more than half way in others. I never proposed any subject to my grand editor that he three cold water upon: I was not a

was so prominent at that particular time as a writer that I had the honour of being bracketed and abused with the late Charles Kingsley and others. We were "worldly writers"; we disgraced the pages of a periodical that appeared to be unaware-much to the dishonour of its conductor—that the Scotch kirk was frowning at it from above, and would be compelled to excommunicate it. The excommunication came in the obscure village of Strathbogie, and the offending journal was publicly burned in the little skittle-ground which called itself a market-place. I waited upon the cheery Doctor soon after this terrible news came to London, and found him resigned and smiling. I suggested my withdrawal from the magazine, which he treated as a joke, and refused to discuss. On my own account I made a little inquiry about Strathbogie, and found that it possessed the highest rate of illegitimacy amongst its children of any place in the known world, with the single exception of a little village in Denmark.

This attack upon the world, the flesh, and the devil only stimulated my activity, and I made a suggestion to Doctor Macleod which he at once accepted. occurred to me that I could bring the Scotch Kirk and the Stage together, either in friendship or in conflict, by writing a story in Good Words, so constructed that the whole of it, except a few lines, could be told in dialogue, and this dialogue could be transferred verbatim to the stage, and acted without any elisions or additions. This was years before the Church and Stage Guild was thought of. The Doctor at once consented, and if the plan were carried out, I think I said there was a chance of the magazine being publicly burned in Edinburgh, with the result that its circulation would perhaps be doubled. story was duly written and published under the title of "Not Above His Business." I spoke to my friend

Mr. J. L. Toole, who agreed to take the piece and produce it, if possible, in Edinburgh or Glasgow under the title of Shop. I am afraid my dear little distinguished friend undertook to do more than he had the courage to perform. At any rate, he kept the piece for some time (he had he English "rights") several occasions in and spoke about rehes cotland. A member provincial theatres, bu Eldred, heard of the of his company, the ten from a story" in piece and heard that Good Words (which I not quite represent the position), and he Mr. Grattan, a wellknown hack dramatist, . t up and see what he could do with it. Mr. Grattan hunted it down, and with little trouble pumped a little conventional matter into it, and dished it up under the name of Glory. Joseph Eldred, not being provided with the necessary cash payment, Glory was sold to Mr. Young, the actor, who was touring with the Robertsonian pieces, and he ultimately produced it, I think. in Glasgow. By this time dear Dr. Macleod was dead (I am rather anticipating my story), and as his statue was being erected in the city, at the top of the Gallowgate, the connection of the play with Good Words was passed over in comparative silence. I presume the piece was successful, or, which in the theatrical business is the same thing, the actor-manager liked the leading part, for Mr. Young produced it afterwards in London, in the theatre that now, oddly enough, bears the name of Mr. Toole. Toole's first idea was that I must have adapted it from something, and that Grattan and Eldred had obtained access to the original, but when he heard the truth, we joined forces and entered upon a long course of expensive litigation which produced the test case in the Legal Records known as Toole v. Young. I shall touch upon this at

a later period. I blame nobody and nothing, but the

infamous laws of my country. I never bear malice. Joseph Eldred was one of my original company when I opened the Gaiety, and Grattan died my debtor.

Dr. Macleod's social qualities were not always appreciated by that portion of the Scotch press which had forgotten Professor Wilson and all the great physical force writers who gathered round him, and dealt with his legitimate successor—my beloved Doctor—according to the narrowest views of the Scotch Kirk. When the Doctor became one of the Queen's Chaplains and an honoured guest at Windsor Castle, he was accused of sitting up on the Terrace at ungodly hours with the Prince of Wales, and indulging in too much smoking and whisky. The "personal" character of these paragraphs could almost be forgiven for the sake of a Scotch diatribe against the national fire water. I had an opportunity of talking to the Prince a few years ago about the genial Doctor, and found that he had retained a pleasant recollection of these Windsor Noctes.

I had frequent chances of seeing the worthy Doctor in his convivial moments, and always found him one of those sensible men, amongst which I am proud to enrol myself, who treated drink as a servant and not

as a master.

In his student days at Edinburgh he had visited the old Theatre Royal, and had a favourable recollection of Miss Helen Faucit in the character of Lady Macbeth. Lady Martin (Miss Helen Faucit) was then playing the same character at Drury Lane Theatre, having emerged for a short time from her retirement as the wife of Sir Theodore Martin. The Doctor expressed a strong desire to renew his youthful recollections of a most charming and accomplished actress, but he saw difficulties. I saw difficulties and the way to overcome them. The lessee and manager of Drury Lane, Mr. F. B. Chatterton, kindly placed the Royal box

and the Royal private entrance at my disposal, and we witnessed the performance without any unpleasant publicity. I may tell my dear Scotch friends that it was not on the eve of the Sabbath, but a Thursday night, and that the actress was the lawfully wedded wife of one of Professor Wilson's favourite staff-part author with Professor Aytoun of the "Bon Gaultier" Ballads, and then, and the actress also, honoured contributors of Maga. When we came out we fumigated ourselves in the only possible way, short of doing penance in a white sheet, by supping at the Albion Tavern opposite, and sitting in what I knew to be Dickens's favourite seat, looking at many celebrated actors and journalists. This to my mind, and I hope and trust to many other minds, did not disqualify the Doctor as one of Scotland's greatest "worthies." day his statue was erected in Glasgow was quite as much an honour to the country as to his sacred and revered memory.

My work for the Daily News, principally Exhibition reporting, and my general work for the Express, an

refreshments, etc., left about five-and-thirty shillings a week to take home to my family at Islington. The Daily News at that time was a threepenny newspaper, with a small if influential circulation, and it did not require to go to press until full an hour after the Daily Telegraph. This enabled me, without much effort, to adopt a principle, not common amongst my critical companions—that of writing the same night, correcting the proofs, and insisting that the mighty effort should be published the following morning. I held that a daily newspaper was what its title implied—a record of all the news of the day before, up to the time of "going to press." Anything "crowded out" was waste-paper stuffing, and ought to be destroyed or forgotten. I always regarded the innocent announcement that sometimes appeared in the daily journals-("In consequence of the unusual press of matter, we are compelled to omit our usual law report")—as a candid confession that the capital, machinery, and management of the paper had utterly and helplessly broken down. A hot and hasty report the same night, according to my view, was better than a careful analysis written the next day, and published the day after. Such an analysis found its proper place in a weekly newspaper.

My training as a dramatic critic or reporter was confined to what I had seen as a playgoer. I had "sat under" Macready during his brilliant management at Drury Lane, when a galaxy of stars and even planets appeared in a piece like Macbeth, sufficient to furnish battle-horses for a dozen modern theatres. I had heard Staudigl in Handel on the same stage, and seen the scenic triumphs of Stanfield and Roberts. The limelight was in its infancy; gaslighting was rude and experimental, and the electric light had not then been discovered. "Congreve" and "Bude" lights appeared occasionally on trial trips

in the streets, but they had not been applied to or dreamed of in connection with theatres. We had not long turned our backs on the nights when the drippings of wax-candles had to be brushed off our best clothes in the morning after a performance at the little conservative Haymarket. Thunder was a teaboard. The stage carpenter was not then the master of the situation. Scenes were painted, not built. Perspectives were visionary, not real. The true artist was encouraged, with the result that the seashore in Acis and Galatea—with its advancing and receding surf—painted and arranged by Stanfield, was one of those poetical scenes which can only be equalled, and can never be surpassed.

My training at the minor theatres was not to be despised. It was something to have seen the unfortunate Elton in Richard the Third, at the City of London Theatre, Norton Folgate, just before his death by wreckage in the Atlantic. The City of London Theatre was a city theatre only in name. It was just outside the city boundary. The Corporation have tolerated one or two "singing-rooms"

Dramatic criticism was in abler hands than mine; dramatic reporting I was quite equal to. At first I may have been a little "cocky." There is a good deal of human nature in the world, and I had my share of it. I have no doubt I registered many hasty and unripe opinions. I believe I invented one critical phrase-"insincerity"-at least, John Brougham rather indignantly said so. He complained that he had been accused by members of my craft, during a long professional life, of many failings, but had never before been called an "insincere actor." He knew as well as I did that what I meant by "insincerity" was the habit of acting with the tongue in the cheek, and a manifest disbelief in the dialogue and action. I meant acting mechanically to earn a salary, and not acting with any sentiment, imagina-tion, or sense of character. I have no doubt that during the five years I occupied the Sock and Buskin Bench of the Daily News I turned many polished phrases that gave pain to many worthy individuals connected with the stage, for which, although rather late in the day, I feel bound to apologise. My only desence is that whatever I wrote was never dictated by personal spite or interested motives. I may, as we all do, have given a friendly "lift" now and then to some one who wanted or asked for it, but as a rule my "notices" were as "honest" as I could make them. They attracted the attention of Shirley Brooks, then the editor of Punch, who placed the pages of that popular periodical for some little time at my disposal. I made one or two, and perhaps more, critical efforts during my judgeship, the principal being an article on Manfred, and one on Lady Martin's Lady Macbeth at Drury Lane, each written after the performance. To fortify myself for the latter effort I carried a well-marked edition of Shakespeare under my arm, which was destined, a few

hours later, to cause me a little trouble. Walking home in the early morning in what looked like the garb of a clergyman, with the book under my arm, I was exposed to far more than the customary annoyance from night prowlers of the female gender. It occurred to me afterwards that I looked like a

scripture reader.

During my long connection with the Daily News—a connection I have not altogethersevered—I experienced every kindness from the various editors, members of the staff, and from printers whom I saw much of in the dead of night, and never knew what they looked like by daylight. My great friend was, and is still, Sir John Robinson, who was only afraid of one thing when he accepted his recent and well-earned knighthood, that I should accuse him of backsliding. He befriended a son of mine, recently dead, during an illness in which he was unable to perform his journalistic duties. I was supported in all I said and did, even if I was occasionally wrong, on the sound and truly liberal principle that anything a contributor does is done by the paper. Sir John's great quality

and excited much critical controversy, dividing our little band into violent partisans and equally violent opponents; and the production of a strange drama supposed to represent Irish life, written by Mr. Edmund Falconer, and called Oonah. The theatre selected for this experiment was Her Majesty's in the Haymarket (now destroyed), which, after the secession of Grisi, Mario, and Costa to Covent Garden, was to be rented very frequently for dramatic and other similar performances. Mr. Edmund Falconer came into notice as an actor at the Adelphi, playing Danny Mann in Boucicault's drama of the Colleen Bawn. He obtained his footing as a dramatist at the Lyceum, with a comedy called Extremes, of the Bulwer type, in which his wife played a middle-aged Lancashire woman with great success. Her dialect was the real thing, and not the green-room jargon which often passes muster on the stage for dialect. In the Exhibition year of 1862, when the town was loaded with visitors, he made a small fortune at the Lyceum with an Irish rebellion play, called Peep o' Day; and this fortune he afterwards lost, or partially lost, in partnership with F. B. Chatterton at Drury Lane. Oonah belonged to this period, and it saw the footlights one Saturday night, and seemed very disinclined to leave them. began at seven o'clock—the usual hour at that time—and with a story that no one, not even John Oxenford, could make clear in narrative, it went onon-on till half-past two on Sunday morning. Soon after midnight the audience, not a large one, began to leave, and by one o'clock there were few people left who were not compelled to remain on duty. ballet of haymakers opened an act about half-past one, and as there was another act to follow, only a few of the most determined dramatic critics retained their seats and made a silent compact to see the end,

whenever it might take place. They were sustained in this heroic resolve by liquid refreshments, intoxicant and non-intoxicant, served under an Act of William the Fourth, which made the service legal as long as the drama was playing its natural length and the curtain was up, or going to rise after an interval. The licensing laws are so peculiar, that the great offence under them is not illegal selling but "habitual keeping," and as Her Majesty's could not be said to be habitually kept to produce long Alexandrine pieces like Oonah for the profit of the pot-house department of the theatre, no technical breach of the law had been committed. The murderer had committed one murder, but he was not an habitual Mr. F. G. Tomlins, Mr. Clement Scott murderer. (then a young and promising beginner), myself and one or two others, whose names I forget after a lapse of thirty years, saw the curtain go down at half-past two, with the play, as far as we could judge, unfinished, and went out to hear the shrill voice of chanticleer and see the "rosy fingers" of morn. The drama was long, but its life was short, and it was known in the

the number. We were polite and attentive listeners. but over the tea and bread and butter afterwards, I am afraid we gave him very little encouragement. Thackeray, not by any means a platform man, although he once had an idea of standing as a Member of Parliament for Oxford City, or Oxford University, went before the public with his semipolitical and Macaulayesque pamphlets-"The Four Georges." His friend Arcedecne (pronounced Archdeacon)—who had sat unconsciously to the great novelist for the portrait of Foker-summed up the general opinion by saying, "Very good, Thack, but wants a piano!" Edmund Yates and his friend Harold Power-the eldest son of the great Irish comedian, who was drowned in the Atlantic in the lost President steamship - made a more businesslike effort at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, following partly in the footsteps of Albert Smith, not long dead. They gave the public a comfortable room, no fees, songs, imitations, sketches of character, and pictures—in fact, what is called an Entertainment." It was well received. Yates was an amateur actor of considerable merit, and an unrivalled storyteller, and Power had distinguished himself with Du Maurier and others in Burnand and Sullivan's Cox and Box, and the best operatta ever written — Offenbach's Les Deux Aveugles. Probably the "show," as Albert Smith and his disciples always called these exhibitions, was not as financially successful as it promised to be, and Yates was too busy as an editor and journalist to bear the nightly strain of the platform, supplemented by the inevitable Saturday matinie. For this and other causes the entertainment was soon withdrawn.

CHAPTER XX.

Dickens's readings—The "Christmas Carol"—" Trial from Pickwick"—" Oliver Twist"—Bill Sikes at the "Vic"—An interdicted play—A good crammer—A good strong serviceable contributor—Fitzball—" Jonathan Bradford"—Nitocris—The unruly candle—Planché—Madame Vestris—William Beverley—Vincent Wallace—Balfe—Tunes—Maddison Morton—Waiting for the verdict—Waterloo Bridge—Bayle Bernard—E. L. Blanchard—Bellew—Fechter—Cosmopolitan playgoers—Charles Kean—Theatrical "backers"—Jeff Prowse—Leicester Buckingham—Rumsey Forster—Tom Taylor—Mr. Recorder Cox—The Field bargain—The Queen—The happy family of journals.

ALL this paved the way for Charles Dickens, when he, at last, decided to come forward as a reader. This, in his case, meant a platform actor, of his own works. He began with the immortal *Christmas Carol*, and that incomparable legal satire, the "Pickwick Trial" He stood erect before his audience with

realised a substantial fortune from these public appearances. He hesitated long and painfully before he gained courage to go to America. He was not disinclined to admit that he had done some little injustice to the United States in his American Notes. The same might have been said of Italy and his "Pictures" from that country. With all his great and commanding genius, he had many prejudices, and was somewhat "parochial" in his sympathies, except on abstract questions of personal liberty. He was an inspired Cockney. I use the word in no depreciating spirit, but as a brand of character.

Later on in his reading career, he decided to give the "Murder of Nancy and the Death of Bill Sikes," from Oliver Twist. This powerful novel, whether dramatised by the author's permission or without it, was for several years under the ban of the Lord Chamberlain's office, when Mr. Donne was the Licenser of Plays. This was before the advent of my friend Mr. Pigott, who in my time was the foreign editor of the Daily News. Mr. Donne justified himself by pointing to the effect of the performance at the Victoria, or Coburg Theatre, in the old New Cut, Lambeth, and the various "minor" houses. He was supported by Sir Spencer Ponsonby Fane—the permanent official working Chamberlain.

I have seen performances of this drama at the Victoria, when the part of "Bill Sikes" was played by Mr. E. F. Savile, the brother of Miss Helen Faucit. The gallery of the Victoria was a huge amphitheatre, probably containing about fifteen hundred perspiring creatures; most of the men in shirt-sleeves, and most of the women bare-headed, with coloured handkerchiefs round their shoulders, called "bandanna wipes" in the slang of the district, and probably stolen from the pockets of old gentlemen who were

given to snuff-taking. This "chickaleary" audience was always thirsty—and not ashamed. It tied hand-kerchiefs together—of which it always seemed to have plenty-until they formed a rope, which was used to haul up large stone bottles of beer from the pit, and occasionally hats that had been dropped below. It was a heavy leaden mass when the play was dull and didactic, but with a fifty-ironclad store of reserved force, which, like a slumbering volcano, could be roused into violent action at any moment. It was a huge, rough, dangerous instrument, which could be easily played upon by a child. Its sense of humour was not keen or refined, and was distinctly dormant, but its sentiment was alive and easily roused by any appeal, however illogical. When the hero in another interdicted play said, "Jack Sheppard is a thief, but he never told a lie!"-this mass of skulking humanity was moved to its very foundations by this doubtful see-saw declaration of virtue.

It was this body—the unregenerate playgoer—who always has existed, and always will exist, in spite of

smeared Nancy with red-ochre, and taking her by the hair (a most powerful wig) seemed to dash her brains out on the stage, no explosion of dynamite invented by the modern anarchist, no language ever dreamt of in Bedlam could equal the outburst. A thousand enraged voices, which sounded like ten thousand, with the roar of a dozen escaped menageries, filled the theatre and deafened the audience, and when the smiling ruffian came forward and bowed, their voices, in thorough plain English, expressed a fierce determination to tear his sanguinary entrails from his sanguinary body.

Dickens selected this scene and Sikes's death for public reading, and gave a few of us a "private view" one night at St. James's Hall. He afterwards read them in public, as he always did everything he had made up his mind to do; but the majority of us thought the scenes were too melodramatic to be realised on the genteel stage of the lecture-room. Like Thackeray's

"Georges," they wanted melos.

My work and my recreations brought me into contact with a number of men and a few women connected with literature, science, and art—all interesting and worthy objects of study. As a rule, I found their affability increased in proportion to their celebrity; it was only the smaller fry who put on airs of self-importance. One or two of the big scientific men, like Professor Owen, I met with some little diffidence, as I had written superficial articles for Household Words on subjects which they had studied for a lifetime. It was less my fault than Charles Dickens's. He wanted "readable" papers. "Let Hollingshead do it," he said, more than once. "He's the most ignorant man on the staff, but he'll cram up the facts, and won't give us an encyclopædical article."

The "Dramatic Authors' Society," of which I was a member, contained a few amusing characters. The

secretary, Stirling Coyne, would not admit that we were a purely commercial association, banded together for the purpose of collecting fees from country managers; but he treated us as a club—a somewhat exclusive club—in which no man could be admitted who was not fit for the Carlton or the Garrick. Fitzball, the Great Surrey Theatre author, was made a member on the ground of his great personal respectability; but if Shakespeare had been alive he would probably have been blackballed on the ground of riotous living, as Garrick would have been kept out for a time from the club which traded under his name, because "he put a few bottles of vinegar in a cellar and called himself a wine merchant."

Fitzball was a dramatist of some mechanical invention, and he was the first to introduce in England the scene in *Jonathan Bradford*, with the four compartments, like pigeon-holes, visible to the audience, in which took place what the amiable author, who always spoke with a chronic cold in his head, called "sibultaneous action." Fitzball had a full belief in

gallery) loved it. The last scene was grand—up to a certain point. The waters of the Nile rose and engulfed the wicked monarch, and his equally wicked courtiers, while they were carousing at a wicked banquet. All the rare wines and luscious fruits and golden goblets were destroyed by the avenging flood—all but one poor, weak, solitary candle. The higher the water rose, the brighter this candle burnt, in defiance of the laws of nature, like a good deed in a naughty world. Soon a dusky form was seen crawling under the water towards this light, and a sound of something like a muttered curse was heard in the theatre. It was a property-man, enraged at his obstinate "property," moving crab-like to destroy it!

Dear old Fitzball was a most lovable man, and during his long and blameless lifetime he added to the small amount of human happiness. His memory

should always be respected.

Mr. Planché, antiquarian, dramatic author, man of the world, and honoured officer of the Heralds' College, was a member of this little guild, and, of course, one of the sticklers for the club idea. generally took the chair at our annual dinner. raised theatrical extravaganza and burlesque to the dignity of a fine art, and wrote verses to be sung on the stage which could be read with pleasure in the In conjunction with Madame Vestris and the study. great scene painter, William Beverley, he invented the transformation scene, which, if we except Sir William Davenant's efforts in Charles the Second's time, first saw the light (and limelight) at the historical Lyceum. This may or may not have been a boon to the drama, according to the various accepted critical ways of looking at it, but the fact has to be recorded. Planché was a great authority on costume, and wrote many books on this interesting subject, and he catalogued, with historical notes, the collection of armour at the Tower. He finished (as most of us do) by writing his memoirs. When I complimented him on this work, a copy of which he had given me, he shook his head. "It's what I had to keep out, dear boy," he said, "that would have made the book, not what I've printed!"

Vincent Wallace, the composer, was another member, who had passed a great deal of his life at sea. and dressed and looked like a captain of a whaler. He knew the cod-fisheries of the Doggerbank; had a distant acquaintance with the North Pole, and suggested anything in appearance, except a musician. Balfe was another man whose face and manner were scarcely those of an operatic composer. He looked like a jolly thriving Irishman, with a decidedly commercial aspect. He was a most liberal man in granting permission to use his tunes—and tunes they were, like Wallace's. It is now the fashion to underrate these men in critical circles, but the great public always welcomes them, with Sir Henry Bishop, as the greatest melodists of the age. Maddison Morton, who died only recently as a brother of the Charterhouse, was another

Bouncer how to deal with his ha'porth of milk, because he "liked the cream to accumulate,"—the audience felt they were in the Strand, and not in the Palais Royal. Maddison Morton, though the author of a hundred pieces, was always a nervous man. He lived at Teddington, or Hampton. On his "first nights" he paced up and down Waterloo Bridge, like a halfpenny suicide, waiting for a small boy who brought him the verdict. Whatever it was, the boy got his threepence and returned towards the theatre, while Morton went to

Waterloo, on his road to bed and the country.

Bayle Bernard, who almost escaped being a poetical dramatist, was another member, and before he died he was the predecessor of Mr. Clement Scott as the leading dramatic critic of the Daily Telegraph. His companion in criticism, or rather theatrical reporting, was E. L. Blanchard, also a member of the D.A.S., the author of at least fifty pantomimes, most of them produced year after year at Drury Lane. Springing from a theatrical stock, being a careful note-taker, and possessing a good memory, he was the universal referee on all questions of theatrical history. While he obtained a reputation for knowledge, he acquired one for extreme age, and many of the young scribblers regarded him as a second Methuselah. When he died in Victoria Street, having left David Garrick's house on Adelphi Terrace, he was between seventy and eighty. He was an amiable man and writer, and was in his time of great service to the Era newspaper. He had been connected with as many short-lived periodicals as Mr. G. A. Sala; and like a true writer of all work, he shrank at nothing. He was quite ready to edit a financial journal, to write an entertainment, and to revise Sternhold and Hopkins's Hymns; to provide sermons for clergymen of limited literary capacity, and to produce an astronomical almanac like Zadkiel. Comic songs fell from him like rain. He was great

in "Answers to Correspondents." A book of riddles. or a new version of Poor Richard's maxims; an auctioneer's descriptive catalogue, or a sensational advertisement for the three great motive powers of the world-Soap, Pills and Mustard-were all fish for his net. His opinions were so neutral that he could write for any paper without a blush. Of course, he was credited with much that he never did. When the When the Reverend Mr. Rose appeared as Mr. Sketchley," with a one-character entertainment called Mrs. Brown at the Play, E. L. Blanchard was thought to have had a hand in it. This was a mistake. The real father of "Mrs. Brown" was Levassor, the French actor—a great humourist, with a little voice. "La Mère Michel's" description of the opera Robert le Diable, as given by Levassor at the St. James's Theatre, undoubtedly led up to "Mrs. Brown's" account of "Queen Victoria's own Theatre."

At Edmund Yates's house in the Abbey Road I was introduced to his neighbour, the Reverend Mr. Bellew, and to Charles Fechter, the great Anglo-

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Church and Stage-began and ended with Mr. Bellew;

it was never repeated.

Mr. Charles Fechter had what I consider the first quality for a successful romantic actor — that of sincerity. Whatever part he played, he believed thoroughly in it, for the time being, and conveyed this belief to his audience. He gave us a Scandinavian Hamlet. He was born in Hanway Yard, Oxford Street, the narrow winding turning uniting that great thoroughfare of haberdashery with the equally great thoroughfare of furniture, Tottenham Court Road, said to have been named after Jonas Hanway, who is falsely credited with having introduced the umbrella into England in the last century. As a matter of fact, it first appeared in Scotland amongst the traders to and from the East Indies. Fechter was taken from his French colony in London—a French colony still—and removed to Paris at the age of three years, where, in due course, he made a great reputation at the old Vaudeville Theatre, now pulled down, which stood opposite the front of the Bourse in the place of that name, and has been replaced by the theatre on the Boulevard des Italiens, in the Anglo-American part of Paris. When Fechter came to London he had many influential literary and artistic friends, and he soon found his way to the friendship of the public. The ordinary English playgoer may or may not be a very cultivated spectator, but, having "free-trade" in his blood. he is the fairest and most cosmopolitan audience in the world. He takes his arts, like his food, from any part of the universe that chooses to appeal to him; and, if he is left alone by interested cliques, which was not the case during the disgraceful Alexandre Dumas riots at Drury Lane in the early fifties, will see what he likes, probably like what he sees, and pay liberally for his fancy.

Fechter, under the direction of Mr. Augustus Harris the father of Sir Augustus-made a successful artistic appearance at the Princess's Theatre, near his birthplace. I fancy some of his friends, rather injudiciously, imbued him with the idea that acting to be an art, ought not to become stage drudgery. He was induced to believe that he could not do justice to himself if he played more than three nights a weeka comfort perhaps for an actor, but certain ruin for a Harris naturally complained, but Fechter was firm, and, though his engagement was a lucrative one, he expressed a willingness to resign it if pressed upon this point. Harris, who had friendly relations with the proprietors of the Daily Telegraph, consulted them as to the "situation"; and they, knowing Charles Kean's provincial movements, and his desire to return for a long farewell engagement at a theatre which he had blessed by his numerous and splendid productions, advised Harris to accept Charles Fechter's resignation. This Harris did-rather to the actor's Charles Kean came back to make a brilliant finish to a brilliant and distinguished theatrical

Mr. Fechter's "backer," if he had any, was Charles Dickens. When Fechter left for America, where he died lamented by at least two continents, he owed the great novelist several thousand pounds. Before Dickens's death the author had received every farthing

from the play-actor.

Streams of journalists floated by me to the inevitable Falls—some big, some little, and some stunted in their growth. Little Jeff Prowse, a poet and a humourist, like Godfrey Turner, was crushed by the. Fleet Street Juggernaut; Leicester Buckingham, the son of James Silk Buckingham, (one of the standing jokes of *Punch* as the inventor of the British and Foreign Institute), killed himself by turning dinners into early breakfasts. In appearance he was like one of the Assyrian heads at the Crystal Palace, in intellect he was extremely feminine; Rumsey Forster, the undefeated reporter who ended his days as a well paid representative of Allsopps, the "Jenkins" of the Morning Post, the pioneer of the American interviewer, a man who if he were thrown out of one window would get in at another, who if kicked down the stairs would persuade a busy lamplighter to lend him a ladder; Tom Taylor, the cleverest man of his day, who combined the Government official with the dramatist, reviewer, and art critic, and left behind him a model of adaptation from the French, made, produced and acted in a fortnight—the perfect Ticket-of-Leave-Man; and little Mr. Cox, provincial Recorder and newspaper monopolist proprietor, who, amongst other things, bought the Field from Benjamin Webster and Mark Lemon for two or three hundred pounds, when it was dying in a hole in Essex Street, and taking it to the corner of Wellington Street in the Strand, and uniting it in a happy family, which comprised the Queen, the Law Times, and many others, turned it into the most successful journalistic property in London.

CHAPTER XXI.

George Francis Train—Early tramways—Society breakfasts—A water drinker—A wine giver—His hopes and visions—Sothern—Lord Dundreary—Its composition—Its success—His short and brilliant career—Henry Irving—Edinburgh, 1859—The Princess's—The St. James's—Manchester—Dion Boucicault—Covent Garden—Princess's—America—Adelphi—Astley's—Princess's again—Boucicault's home life—Joseph Jefferson—Rip van Winkle.

ONE man at this period ought not to be passed over in comparative silence—Mr. George Francis Train, the American pioneer of London (and English) tramways. He made the most fatal mistake that any man can make in England, and probably in other countries—that of being ten or twenty years before his time. He was imperfectly acquainted with our hide-bound prejudices, our imperial and parochial machinery, framed not to do much work itself, and to prevent as

George Francis Train had superabundant energy and little judgment. He fixed upon a part of London which, though it once boasted of Tyburn Gate and the Newgate gallows, had purged and lived cleanly, devoting itself to the cultivation of stucco and gentility. Of all places in the great metropolis he must set his mind upon Connaught Terrace and the Bayswater Road, with the result that he was defeated at every point by the local owners of property. They were quite right to fight for the privileges which the law had given them, and Mr. Train was ill-advised to fix upon this spot, while London—particularly the south side—"was all before him where to choose his place of rest and Providence his guide."

He was a most intelligent man in other respects bright and entertaining, with social qualities that drew a number of the best people in literature and society round him at his very pleasant Sunday morning breakfasts in St. James's Street. He had a full belief that he was destined to become the President of the United States, and confessed it. He was a water-drinker from choice, and said he could get more drunk on this simple liquid than his guests could on Like Mr. Henry Labouchere and Sir Henry Thompson, he gave each man what he liked and never forced his temperance views on others. He is still alive in America—a lecturer and an editor. What he could not do in London at the end of the fifties was left for another American to do at the end of the sixties. This was Mr. Chapman, a gentleman with whom at one time I had some slight business connection.

Another man of great social quality, who literally came upon the scene at this period, was Mr. Sothern, the creator of "Lord Dundreary." He appeared at the Haymarket Theatre at a time when the fortunes of that house were at a rather low ebb, and in a piece



the honoured names of M Footlights: it absolutely history was very commonpl simple annals of the stage. for an American manager, York it dropped amongst a a "walking gentleman" wh broad Atlantic from Birmir gentleman" was cast for a he was clever and pushing, a bad—it was impossible to spo develop his character in his c by a process of encrustation. it as a real "Savile Row" pa swell whose soul was in mind was in his boots-ar picture he bore a faint reserr Englishman of the French car the pattern of his trousers di you with blindness, and his England, and not dreamt of the literary tailoring. The wa some conundrums from the " nigger " minstrel troupe, some circus clown, some hops, skips "swell" in the pantomime and as much -

America, because it was supposed to satirise the law of primogeniture and hereditary legislation. It did nothing of the sort, and was merely clever clowning, in which a perpetual eye-glass was quite an important factor. This walking gentleman was Mr. E. J. Sothern, and his concrete production was Lord

Dundreary.

About the second or third night of its performance at the Haymarket, with Mr. Buckstone in one of the worst parts he ever represented, John Oxenford strolled into the theatre in a depressed state—overcome, for the hundredth time, by his domestic troubles. The character of the imbecile lord—not the piece—amused him consumedly, and two days afterwards (he never wrote the same night) he gave Lord Dundreary — as the piece came to be called—such a "leg up" as the Times at that period could alone give it. Lord Dundreary ran for a year or more, to the great profit of Mr. Sothern, (who was on "sharing terms") and Mr. Buckstone; but, to show the inconsistency of human nature, the latter was dissatisfied with the success because, in a measure, it kept him out of his own theatre!

Mr. Sothern played other parts—some suited to his talent, some not; and, of course, he wished to show what he could do in characters of sentiment. When an actor makes such an overwhelming success in one part as Mr. Sothern did, the public rarely want to see him in any other. This was his case, as it was afterwards the case of Mr. Joseph Jefferson in Rip Van Winkle. Mr. Sothern was condemned for life to grin through the horse-collar of his own creation. life was not a long one. He attempted too much for his health. He aimed at being a Society man as well as an actor. His two chief recreations were elaborate practical joking-in which he was a formidable rival to Theodore Hook—and hunting. He would rush up

by special train from Leighton Buzzard, or some such hunting centre, and arrive at the theatre with hardly time to change his clothes. The result was easily foreseen. He left three charming children, two sons and one daughter. The daughter kept mostly to private life, one amiable son, Lytton Sothern, died, and the surviving son has made a reputation on the

American stage far sounder than his father's.

My duties as a dramatic critic for the Daily News and the London Review were not performed without making theatrical acquaintances, and some few of these developed into friendships. These intimacies with the workers of the stage may not have warped my judgment-what little judgment I had-though its tendency was undoubtedly in that direction. Dramatic criticism is not (or was not) so well paid, and was not, on the whole, so agreeable, that the poor reporter felt bound to retire into a cave and turn his back upon all social intercourse. of my theatrical friendships were begun before I accepted the Rhadamanthine wig. Mr. Henry Irving in Edinburgh in 1850.

wholly uninhabitable — I saw the abnormally tall houses and "wynds" where these people lived, I began to understand this peculiar feature of the Scotch character.

Mr. Toole was in Edinburgh on a week's tour, as he was shut out of London by "Passion-Week," when most theatres were closed, either from choice, or "by order." In London he could not play on "Ash Wednesday," but in Scotland he could play even on Christmas Day or Good Friday. On the stage of the old Theatre Royal, I was introduced to a tall, thin, interesting, gentle young man, who was Mr. and Mrs. Wyndham's "walking gentleman" and "general utility" actor; this was Mr. Irving. We all had quarters at a Temperance Hotel, and the next day was Sunday. We were moderate men, but not total abstainers, and what we wanted we obtained without any difficulty by cash payments. The decoration of the room we were in was peculiar—like the first dawnings of æstheticism in upholstery. The following morning, when asked to write our names in the "Vistor's Book," I attached the following lines to my signature:—

Is this a Temperance Hotel, where wine is never vended?
Or, is its temperance a sham—its tea with brandy blended?
Though drinking tea, I think I'm drunk; my eyes and brain seem reeling,
The Turkey carpet's on the wall—the floor-cloth's on the ceiling!

The next time I saw Mr. Irving, was at the Princess's Theatre, where he played a very small part in a piece called *Ivy Hall*—an adaptation by Mr. John Oxenford of Octave Feuillet's moral play—*The Romance of a Poor Young Man.* Mr. Irving returned to the country, but came back again and made a young man's success as "Rawdon Scudamore" in Boucicault's drama of *Hunted Down* at the St. James's

Theatre. I regret that I did not see this performance. Mr. Toole, at that time, lived in some sky-chambers at the mouth of the Exeter Arcade in Wellington Street, Strand, and here the three of us met again one Sunday night, little dreaming of the future. Next door to me, on each side, were two of my workshops -the offices of Household Words and the Morning Post; a little way up the street was the Athenaum office-another workshop, and behind me was the office of the Illustrated Times, Mr. Vizetelly's paperanother workshop. Opposite, seen through the windows, was the Lyceum Theatre, the platform of my first farce and of my first amateur efforts on the stage, while underneath me and behind me was the block of property-Exeter Arcade, the east-end of Exeter Street, the Strand Music-hall, an old and mysterious hotel, &c.—which in six or seven years was to become the Gaiety Theatre. Did Toole dream that in 1869 he was to enter a stage door which might have led to the stairs up which he had been a lodger? Did I dream that if I took a brick out of the south wall of

seen Charles Kean in 1854 in this part, when he first produced the piece, and never thought I should see a better representation of the dual characters. I was mistaken. Irving's Duboscq and Lesurques is one of those powerful and monumental performances,

which come to us once in fifty years.

Dion Boucicault, at this time, was a power in the dramatic world. When very young he had made a phenomenal reputation at Covent Garden Theatre, with his comedy of London Assurance, produced by Charles Mathews and Madame Vestris. It had Mrs. Nisbet in the cast, and her companions were the most distinguished players of the day. Boucicault became the "stock-author" of the Princess's under Charles Kean's memorable management, when French melodrama was freely played, alternately with the most elaborate and archæological Shakespearian revivals. The Corsican Brothers was one of the most thrilling dramas ever imported, and Louis the Eleventh the most finished. A French version of the Faust legend of course found a place, with the same improved mechanical effects that distinguished the Corsican Brothers. Stage-carpentry was certainly developed and improved by Charles Kean and his advisers. Kean used every means at his disposal to obtain the support of the press, short of writing his own criticism. like David Garrick. His one, and perhaps only, opponent was Douglas Jerrold, who used the pages of Punch to gratify some private spite. Charles Kean had not the courage of Alfred Bunn, who stopped similar attacks with a "reply" that washed about as much dirty linen in public as would satisfy the most greedy laundress.

Boucicault, for domestic and other reasons, went to America, where he met with considerable success, and returned to the Adelphi with the drama of the Colleen Bawn, in which he acted with his wife, and

made a fortune for himself and his manager, or rather partner, Mr. Benjamin Webster. When Boucicault went into a theatre it was always on "sharing terms," and that theatre became his for the time being. was as imperious as an author as he was as a stage manager. When he attempted management for himself, he was visionary first and timid afterwards. He got an idea that Astley's Theatre in the Westminster Bridge Road, because it was only a few hundred yards from the new Houses of Parliament, only wanted a new name and a new policy to make it a fashionable playhouse outside the world of sawdust. He took it, altered and re-decorated it, and called it the New Westminster Theatre. His company was fairly good, but his opening pieces were bad. He soon became panic-stricken, when he discovered by experience (which soon comes in a theatre) that his topographical theory was wrong, and that Astley's was not likely to become a favourite lounge for lazy legislators. He fled from the place with many debts upon his shoulders, which, some little time afterwards, although not legally bound to do so, he

large and young family, happy themselves, and a source of happiness to many others—myself amongst the number. Boucicault was a patient and constant worker—a temperate man, simple in his habits, who treated dramatic authorship as a trade. He worked harder than a banker's clerk, and made his brother, who acted as his secretary, work also. Early and late, he never idled, and after his pleasant little dinner parties and social gatherings he regained his lost time by increased industry. For a year or more I had daily and hourly opportunities of witnessing this happy life, and the making of at least one great. theatrical reputation. Joseph Jefferson, an unassuming actor from America—gifted, as he afterwards proved, with the most pathetic humour-dropped into the little circle one day, with an idea, to be blessed in a few weeks, with Rip Van Winkle. In due course he appeared at the Adelphi with Boucicault's piece, and under Boucicault's unrivalled stage management, and made himself the admiration of England and America. His impersonation of Washington Irving's immortal dreamer was never seen without arousing a feeling of affection for the actor.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Alhambra — History — The Panopticon — Liquidation — E. T. Smith — His bargain — The transformation scene — The Great Theatre of Varieties—" Operatic selections "—Faust—A people's opera first—An "upper ten" opera afterwards—Copyright forfeited—Leotard—His talent and training—His originality—His simplicity—F. Strange—Energetic management—Big ballets—Legal prosecution—Wigan v. Strange—A neutral decision—Agitations—"Rothschild's "—Ludgate Hill Viaduct—Free trade in theatres—Parliamentary Committee No. 1—Parliamentary Committee No. 2— The "turn" system—Grimaldi—Mr. Toole—The Canterbury and Oxford—Prosecution of Weston's—Almack's—A "disorderly" house—Illegal "morning performances"—The authorities alarmed—No reform—A tinkered Act of Parliament—A "dangerous person."

WITH a Lord Chamberlain licensing theatres only according to some fancy idea about the "wants of the neighbourhood," and treating the Strand, the thorough-

amongst places of public amusement. It was built by a blameless, Pandemonium-Paving Company, Limited, to further the cause of scientific recreation, and as a glorified Polytechnic it was opened with prayer and an organ. It was a monument of insolvent-respectability. Before it had time to reform the unsavoury character of the neighbourhood, it had to go into liquidation, and its lease and fittings were offered to any bidders at a Pall Mall auction room. Amongst these bidders was a speculative genius, named E. T. Smith; who would have bought Westminster Abbey or the Channel Fleet, if they had been under the hammer, and would have thought how he was going to pay for his pur-E. T. Smith, amongst other chases afterwards. things, had been a policeman, and during his remarkable career, he had held more public-houses, wine - vaults, theatres, opera - houses, and music and dancing gardens, than half a dozen English The building and its contents-known Barnums. as the Panopticon in the early fifties-which cost, in prospectus figures, £100,000, was knocked down to "Smith" for about £8,000. "Smith" accepted the bargain: sold the great organ to St. Paul's Cathedral for one round sum, the great engines and boilers to some other establishment for another round sum, and a lot of little things for various amounts, until he had almost realised the purchasemoney. The space where the organ and other furniture stood, was converted into a stage, and under the sanction of the great Moll Flanders' Act (the 25th Geo. II. cap. 36), he opened it as what we now call a music-hall, under the happy title of the Alhambra. To do Smith justice, he gave good music, if his drinks had the usual faults of a "tied house;" as he was at that time the lessee of Her Majesty's Theatre, in the Haymarket, playing, amongst other things, Macfarren's opera of "Robin Hood," with Mr. Sims Reeves and a large and effective company, to receipts that sometimes fell as low as twelve pounds a night. He sent over some of his singers to the Alhambra, to sing "operatic selections," then very popular, copying Mr. Charles Morton's policy at the Surrey-side "Cante ese "operatic selections" had an educa ce on the middle and lower middle class. d's "Faust" was first produced in Paris, it eve an instantaneous success, as Gounod rich financier like Meyerbeer, able and ouy up the seats of he could grow a fine a theatre for two mo crop of favourable public, on. Mr. Gye, the

director of the Italian opera at Covent Garden, went over to Paris to see "Faust," and came back saying that it was not bad, but had only one good thing in it—a soldiers' chorus! In the meantime, Gounod and his friends, by not observing the ridiculous rules and regulations of the International Copyright Treaty of that time, had lost the English rights of his opera on a technical point, and his great and enduring work had consequently fallen into the "public domain." Gounod was no wiser than his brethren in trouble. A Frenchman writes a work, and then lies on his back, expecting International Copyright to fall into his mouth, like over-ripe plums.

Faust, being free game, was seized by Herr Jonghmanns, Mr. Charles Morton's able conductor, and with the aid of Miss Emily Soldene, Miss Russell, and many most capable singers and chorus, it was played so long, and with such profitable results at the Canterbury Music Hall, that every butcher's-boy could whistle the principal airs while waiting for orders. When Colonel Mapleson came into possession of Her Majesty's Theatre, and produced Faust because it was a novelty, and Mr. Gye, at Covent Garden, followed Mapleson's lead, the novelty was

confined to the "upper ten," and their friends and followers. The swinish multitude, as far as the divine music was concerned, knew all about it.

E. T. Smith followed Morton's example for a time. until as usual, he disposed of his interest in the He never kept anything very long. It became an American Circus for a year or more, and then fell into the hands of Mr. Wilde, of Norwich, the son of a well-known electioneering agent, in the days when votes had an unblushing market value. It was during Mr. Wilde's lesseeship that the most graceful and original acrobat of modern times made his first appearance in England. This was Leotard, the inventor of the Flying Trapèze. Leotard's father kept a gymnastic school at Toulouse, and when his son was perfect in his unique performance, they went to Paris en famille, according to the French custom. Before Leotard was allowed to perform at Franconi's, he had to give a demonstration—a trial performance for the licensing authorities. He had to fall from the trapeze from various heights, and go through the form of various possible accidents. When it was found that whatever happened, he came upon his feet, his license was granted, and by the advice of Mr. Augustus Harris, he was soon induced to come to England. His performance caused a real "sensation." His movements were more like those of a bird than of a man. The ease, the grace, the unerring certainty with which he executed his feats had never been equalled. His three swinging bars, suspended by long ropes, carried him from one high perch to another, right across the auditorium and stage of the vast building. His father stood on the narrow platform placed across the pit and stalls, and carefully swung each pendulum. His mother stood at the wing with prepared chalk and a towel for his hands, and always acted as his dresser. It was a simple

family party. Leotard was modest and retiring, and showed whole generations of acrobats how to dress His black leather boots, his lavender leggings and black velvet trunks had nothing of the booth about them. I believe his first engagement at the Alhambra brought him \$100 a week, and I know when I engage two or three years afterwards at the san a return visit. I gave him £30 a night. H e same modesty and the same family sur He was spared the pain of growing old, ung disease at Toulouse soon after he ha the age of thirty.

The offending balle. ambra which invited and obtained prosecution, ne which was bodily "lifted" from Drury Lane Theatre. Auber's oriental opera, L'Enfant Prodigue, was turned into an English spectacular drama, called Azaël, and produced by James Anderson, the popular actor, and Macready's favourite "young man," at Drury Lane in 1851-the year of the great exhibition, Mr. Anderson's attempt at management in the temple of his old master, was not very successful, and in spite of real camels. Auber's attractive music—the portion of it that was used—and Mr. and Miss Vandenhoff's and the lessee's impressive acting, nothing of Azail remained in the memory, except a great dagger-dance with its characteristic melody. This dance more strikingly produced at the Alhambra by Mr. Harry Boleno, the pantomimist, who had been in the Drury Lane Company, served to open the newly-decorated and carpeted Theatre of Varieties in Leicester Square, and to provoke the theatrical monopolists. No theatrical super at a shilling a night, no call-boy, no ballet-girl and no bill-sticker could have mistaken this dramatic dance for anything but part of a stage play, though it was left for a whole army of judges and counsel to puzzle their brains over it for months, to split hairs,

and formulate nice distinctions. One eminent judge thought that Mr. Henry Russell, singing The Ship on Fire on a platform, accompanying himself on a piano, was performing a "stage play," with or without a license. Another eminent judge sought comfort and found it in the blessed word divertissement—an imported French term, which was supposed to describe a dance without form and void, that told nothing, and suggested nothing but graceful muscular exercise. Finally the judge who thought that a divertissement might not be in itself a ballet, although a ballet might include a divertissement, said that probably, if more evidence had been brought before them the prosecutors in Wigan v. Strange might have proved their case, but they had scarcely done so, and the question must therefore remain open. The judge did not say for future litigation, but everyone in court put that construction on the decision.

The important question—is a ballet a stage-play, and therefore illegal in any theatre not licensed by the 6th & 7th Vic., cap. 68, instead of the 25th Geo. II. cap. 36?—could not be left suspended in the air like a Mahomet's coffin. It was decided not to leave it suspended. Amongst my accomplishments I had learnt the arts of agitation and "lobbying." I had used them effectively in 1862, and the year afterwards I used them, not quite so effectively, in a question of metropolitan disfigurement. The Ludgate Hill Viaduct was required by the railway world, and as its projectors were determined to go over the road instead of under it, the Art interests of St. Paul's and its able surveyor Mr. Penrose, the trade interests of the picturesque and important thoroughfare, and the general æsthetic sentiment of devoted Cockneys like myself, were aroused, and I was selected to organise this opposition. Ludgate Hill, with its graceful ascent and its equally graceful curve; the

thin black steeple of St. Martin's-on-the-Hill, marking where the old Lud-gate once crossed the road, the dome of the light though massive Anglo-Italian cathedral-Wren's masterpiece of architectural harmony, all forming a perspective unequalled in England, and perhaps in the world, were threatened with great and lasting disfigurement by the inevitable demon, Utility. It was sentiment on one side and brutal but necessary human progress on the other. The black tube, hideous offspring of Destiny, is the sole connecting link in the centre of London between the south and northside railways, and is the ceaseless conduit of traffic day and night, from one year's end The Times newspaper, all the leading to another. bankers and merchants of the City of London thirty years ago were on my side; on the other side were Sir Samuel Morton Peto, M.P., and the great railway interest of the House of Commons. We were defeated. The first year I stood alone; the second year I had the powerful assistance of Messrs. Baxter, Rose & Norton.

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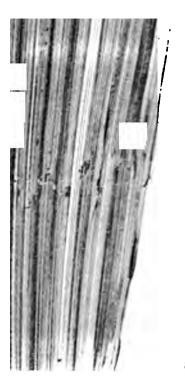
This and other jobs of a similar kind qualified me as an organiser of an agitation for "Free Trade in I had the invaluable assistance of Dion Theatres. Boucicault. We formed a Committee, which included Mr. Thomas Chappell of Bond Street, Mr. Howard Paul, Mr. Elliott Galer, Mr. Frederick Strange and others, and we had no difficulty in getting what moderate subscriptions we wanted. I acted as Honorary Secretary. One day old Mr. Willis came to me in a state of nervous excitement. He had heard of our Committee, and knew it had something to do with music, the drama, dancing, both on and off a stage, drinking, smoking and licenses, but what all this meant was to him a mystery. He had kept "Willis's Rooms," in King Street, St. James's, for fifty years and never knew he required a license! Probably "Almacks" was a "disorderly house" within the meaning of the Act, and none of the immaculate dukes and duchesses knew it!

I "lobbied," Boucicault "lobbied," we persuaded friends to "lobby," and at last we got a Special Committee of the House of Commons appointed, of which the Right Honourable Mr. Goschen was the - chairman. We beat up evidence in our favour, and our opponents came forward and gave evidence against us. Interested people naturally defended their own interests, but the mass of intelligent people who saw visions, and predicted ruin to art, literature, drama. and playhouses, unless everything was allowed to remain in its then perfect state, was truly astonishing. Stripped of mere words, they were asking that pothouses should be everlasting pot-houses. Lord Sydney, the then Lord Chamberlain, a naturally liberal man. gave evidence, and saw no reason why his department should not license all London places of amusementmusic-halls as well as theatres. This was a practical renunciation of the "wants of the neighbourhood"

theory, which was killed by this inquiry. I was suddenly called upon by Mr. Goschen to give evidence, which I did without preparation there and then. I knew the subject, and advocated liberty and equality. The Committee in their Report, published at the close of 1866, took the same view. It was never acted upon. In 1892 a similar Committee of the House of Commons was appointed, as if one ponderous Blue-book was not enough and the former Committee had never existed. The chairman in 1892 was the Right Honourable David Plunket, M.P., and the same ground was wearily gone over. I was representing the Daily News in the room, and was called on suddenly in the same way to give the same Twenty-six years had not altered my opinions; the protective spirit was not dead. Actors and managers showed more than a sneaking kindness for the art of standing still, forgetting that, owing to the exertions of free-traders, like myself, they were now allowed to do things with honour, profit, and impunity which sixty years ago would have subjected

always in advance of his competitors, was giving good music at the Oxford, and working it with the Canterbury, practically with one company. This "two turns" a night system was just appearing above the horizon. Oddly enough, it had been initiated by the theatres, and by a man as bitterly opposed to the coming avalanche of music-halls as Mr. Benjamin Mr. Toole, three or four years before, while engaged at the Adelphi, put in a nightly farce at the St. James's, then also under the management of Mr. Webster. This, after all, was only going back to the beginning of the century, when Grimaldi, the great clown, appeared in two pantomimes a night, one at Sadler's Wells and the other at Covent Garden, running through short cuts down hill, from Islington to Bow Street, with a thick coat thrown over his stage costume. This extra work killed him before he was fifty, but he was tempted to do it. There is little that is new under the sun, and nothing that is new under the limelight.

To forward the purposes of our agitation, it was necessary to make an example of one of the small halls to show that the law was actually being broken, night after night, in these places as much as in larger establishments. I selected "Weston's" in Holborna popular hall founded by the man whose name it bore, although, like many of his tribe, he had been compelled to sell his birthright for a mess of pottage. It was at this hall that a singer named Stead made a comparatively lasting reputation in the kingdom of ephemera by a song called the "Perfect Cure." Dressed something like a French circus clown with a tall conical hat, he jumped sixteen hundred times, like an india-rubber figure, about three feet from the ground, while he was singing a song of the average standard of music-hall idiocy. This performance so struck Mr. Wilkie Collins, that he wrote an article in



anountain S songs, the \vec{n} and intelliger a hall conde Legislature to I set Bow Stre and appeared by their legal , way, but I car knew the object shilling fine, with desendant was m exception one o showmen of his shows," "barmaid he is the only ma same breath as 1 northern seaside I a persect Paradise curiosity worth stud caterers. My next tilt in t. against the brutal an Second (the 25th, ca days of Hogarth half-savage legislation and the rule of the inflated Bumbles in authority, who are only too delighted to administer it. This shining example of Hanoverian Government had one clause essentially anti-Jacobite, which made any performance taking place before five o'clock in the afternoon so illegal and criminal, that the house in which it took place was condemned, without appeal, to lose its precious license for ever. This, of course, cut the ground from under all morning performances—the fashionable recreation of the classes blessed with money and leisure. Just before licensing day in October, when the old Middlesex magistrates, sitting at the Sessions House in Clerkenwell, were about to renew the music and dancing licences, as they had renewed them for a century, without looking at the clauses of the Act which created their authority, I appeared in the character of a "common informer, and lodged an objection to the Egyptian Hall and the Hanover Square Rooms-two of our most blameless resorts—which objection so frightened the magistrates and the proprietors of the offending halls, that they sent a deputation to me to induce me not to ruin these two harmless concert-rooms. For about a day I was stern and unrelenting, and pointed out to them that, as good citizens, they were bound to join forces with me and get the bad old Act repealed. Mr. Thomas Mitchell, of Bond Street, one of the offenders, used his influence with me on the score of private friendship, and at last I withdrew my unanswerable opposition on the understanding that I was to be aided in every possible way in my agitation. I was too yielding and too trusting. The Act was tinkered, not repealed. A "short Bill" was hurried through the House of Lords first and the Commons afterwards taking the sting out of the clause, and I had the honour of being denounced by a noble earl as a "very dangerous person."

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CHAPTER XXIII.

Stage direction—Musical referme—M

Illegal pantomime—Plean riction—Fines—The "Canticion—Fines—The "Canticion—Stamped by a boy—Dance without and ballets make progress as seen—Sold to Paris—Official stage impediation to known in Paris in nasty experience—Fauguist—Leicester Squatemade decent by private and seed as a complex section—Fines—The "Canticion—Fines—The "Canticion — Fines—The "Cant

My connection with this agitation, and my friendship with Mr. Strange, led to my being offered the stage directorship of the Alhambra when its proprictor was persuaded to turn it into a limited company. Mr. Strange was a man who spared no labour and expense to serve the public well, and he would rather have pawned his boots than have given a shabby entertainment. He brought about £50,000 with him from the Crystal Palace, where he was the refreshment contractor, and he did not convert himself into a "company" from pecuniary necessity, or any desire to cram his pockets. The price he asked and got for his property would have been considered absurdly moderate in 1890, and a great proportion of this money he lost by backing the South in the American War, led away by the money article in the Times, then written by Mr. M. B. Sampson. Mr. Sampson was an able man, but a most untrustworthy guide. and Mr. Strange was only one of his many victims.

The company was duly formed, with Mr. Strange as managing director. I had a consulting seat at the board, and acted as stage director, without my name

appearing publicly. I acted in Strange's name, who trusted me in everything. My first step was to improve the orchestra, being a firm believer in good music. I sent for M. Jules Rivière, then conducting a small and capable band at the Adelphi, and got him appointed as musical director. He was treated with liberality, and soon organised the best orchestra in London. M. Rivière was a most able, hardworking, and honest servant of the company—a man with a nice sense of honour, whose word could be implicitly trusted. He had and deserved all the support that I could give him.

On the stage I found a large and costly chorus, with a few good principal singers, sent on twice a night in plain evening-dress to sing "operatic selec-This feature had been copied from Mr. Charles Morton and the Canterbury. Our stage was large and phenomenally high, though pinched in width at the sides, and I thought it better to develop our supposed illegal speciality, ballets, and to save about £70 a week by reducing this chorus almost to glee limits. I retained about eight good voices, and amongst them a young female contralto, who was soon engaged (with my consent) for a term of years by the Messrs Chappell, and ultimately became a principal singer at the great provincial musical festivals. The first ballet in which the abnormal height of the stage was utilised was one called the Titanic Cascades, in which we used countless tons of real water, coming from the top, floating down fissures of virgin cork, and plunging at the bottom into an enormous tank on its road to flush the St. Martin's sewers. Amongst my frequent visitors on the stage was Mr. Augustus Harris, who came to see what his friend the amateur stage manager was doing. One night he brought his two boys, Augustus and Charley, who were home from Paris on a holiday, wearing the uniform of their public school. I gave them each the half-crown "tip," so much beloved by schoolboys, and joked them about their resemblance to telegraph messengers. They probably thought I was a very nice jocular gentleman but a very poor stage manager, as they must both have had a shadowy

presentiment of the

I had not been ge director before I ch"-having a most attempted a panton competent company control. There were Mr. John Dauban a arde (now Mrs. John Dauban), Mr. Johnn, his wife, all perfect, Ir. Fred Evans and me with rare and exceptional merit as pattormists. The company included "Turtle Jones," an extraordinary "knockabout" performer, who preferred to be beaten with a stick to being tickled with a straw, and the bigger the stick and the harder you hit the more he liked it put them together in a scene—the usual shop and red-hot poker scene-from any harlequinade, and called it Where's the Police? The police very soon answered the call. We were hauled up to Marlborough Street for an illegal performance of a stage play. My friend Mr. Montagu Williams, who was then against me, not only objected to the "sketch" but to the grammar of its title. I had, in defence, to remind him of the "noun of multitude" dictum. Grammar or no grammar, we were convicted. We appealed. Our appeal came on at Quarter Sessions, at old blind Sir Iohn Fielding's Court at Westminster. Serjeant Ballantine, afterwards my friend, was for us; Mr. Hardinge Giffard, afterwards Lord Chancellor, was against us. The conviction was confirmed, and we were fined £20 for each performance, £240 in all. and were ordered not to repeat the offence. Mr. Giffard's sympathies were in opposition to his brief. and against a vested interest in red-hot pokers.

During my directorship of the Alhambra stage (1865-8) I was the innocent introducer of the Parisian "Can-Can" to London. I went to Paris with our ballet master, Mr. Milano, in search of novelties. Late one night at the Café du Helder, then a popular supper-house, we found the room crowded, and a very handsome gipsy-like woman the somewhat uproarious belle of the evening. I enquired who she was, and was told that she was Finette, the celebrated can-can dancer, who had been on tour in Germany with Raphael Felix's company (the brother of Madame Rachel). I only knew the can-can as the daughter of the "Carmagnole," the favourite dance of the Great Revolution, but I knew that in England—the country with a dozen licensing systems and only one fish-sauce—where names excite more horror than things, that the can-can was not a welcome sound to the licensing authorities.

I decided to engage Finette; and knowing that Mr. E. T. Smith was running a pantomime at the Lyceum Theatre, written by Mr. W. S. Gilbert, and knowing that Mr. Milano had "arranged" the dances for this pantomime, I thought that it would be prudent to get the Lord Chamberlain's stamp on Finette before we took her to the debateable ground of Leicester Square. Smith was ready and willing, and slapped us on the back, as he had slapped old Lord Lytton when he suddenly burst upon him at Knebworth, and succeeded in persuading him that if he wanted more fame and fortune, he would entrust E. T. S. with The Rightful Heir. Smith generally managed to get what he wanted. In this pantomime he introduced the Vokes Family to London, who had wasted their sweetness for more than a year in an obscure music-hall at Edinburgh. Mr. Wyndham, the lessee of the theatre in that city—where I first met Mr. Irving—was loud in his praises of these

unique pantomimists and dancers when he saw them in the Strand, not being aware that they had been well-known "stars" for so long a period at a place

almost next door to his own playhouse.

Finette, duly stamped with the legitimate stamp, after the Lyceum pantomime was over, appeared at the Alhambra and made a success. She was dressed as effectively as and a little more decently than a "burlesque prince," and her dance had none of the offensive features of the can-can in petticoats. most that could be said against it was that it was not a hornpipe. Her troupe counted for little or nothing. It was Finette, and always Finette. She had the usual sentiment of the French artiste, and loved to cry, and talk about her mother. She gave me a valuable antique ring at parting. Her career was short and brilliant while it lasted. I heard with sorrow from a friend of mine, a Foreign Office messenger, that a few years afterwards she died in pain and poverty in one of the hospitals of Constantinople.

produced a ballet in which he arranged a crystal scene, made up of innumerable pieces, suspended by wires, which being lighted with many-coloured lights, threw a dazzling and poetical glamour on the fairy forest beyond. Whatever Mr. Callcott did was marked with originality and refinement, and he was not content with repeating the gin-palace glories of the ordinary transformation scene. The fame of this crystal curtain spread to Paris, and I sold it to Marc Fournier, the author-manager, then the director of the great spectacular dramatic house, the Porte St. Martin. Mr. Callcott went over to instal his production and to superintend its lighting and working. He came back in a week despondent; he had never been able to show its beauties owing to the fire regulations. He forgot that he was in the city that invented red tape, and he was probably not humbug enough to be a diplomatist. According to his own account, he found the fireman — the sapeur pompier — a Government officer, although paid by the manager, the master of the situation. If he wanted his glass curtain lighted from the top, it was "forbidden; if he wanted it lighted from the bottom, it was equally forbidden. He took his return ticket and came back to England. A week afterwards the curtain fell and was smashed, and the atoms flew over the ground floor of the theatre and created a panic. Marc Fournier was to have paid £300 for this scene, but I fancy we never got more than £200. Financial difficulties are known occasionally in Parisian, as well as in London, theatres.

The backward condition of mechanical science on the French stage at this time was shown when my pantomimists, Messrs. Dauban and Warde, went over to the same theatre to play in that funny version of "Jack Sheppard," known as Les Chevaliers du Brouillard (the Knights of the Fog), in which Hogarth is introduced as one of the characters, and

George the Third appears and pardons the clever prison - breaker, who is a devout anti-Jacobin. Dauban wanted a "star-trap" (I never knew the time when he was without such a want). He was a champion-record jumper through this circle of radii imbedded in the stage, springing from below and going through the fle gh up in sight of the audience. No such known or had ever been heard of in Fr i, and had, therefore, never been "forbide in wrote to me, and I lent him two that 1 ng at the Alhambra. which he brought 1 y packed when his engagement was fin

During one of our elau. allets, when, at least, ninety girls were in the final tableau at different elevations, supported by irons, the front of the house suddenly became filled with smoke, which arose from below through the gratings. Chairs and tables furnished the pit and stalls floor, and smoking and drinking were general. A lighted match had dropped through one of these gratings and ignited some straw carelessly thrown out of wine cases in the cellar. The audience behaved with great coolness. It was summer time, and late-about half-past eleven-and they were not very numerous. They quietly walked out of the building, although they fully believed the house was on fire. The real trouble was on the stage. Most of the girls fainted in the irons, expecting to be roasted alive. I blew down the orchestra pipe, and told Rivière to change the slow development movement to galop time, and we got the curtain down in three minutes instead of ten. No damage was done. but it was a nasty experience.

The Alhambra had the honour of introducing Mr. Farini to London in one of those sensational "high" acrobatic performances, for which the building was adapted and famous. It was the finest example of

Moorish architecture in London, and it was a misfortune, in more senses than one, that it was burnt down in the early eighties. I have my own theory about the fire, and all similar fires. The place, at the time, was working under a Lord Chamberlain's license, and smoking was therefore strictly forbidden in the auditorium. The habits of variety show frequenters cannot be altered, even by a semi-royal edict, and smoking of the worst kind—smothered and forbidden smoking—was, no doubt, indulged in by the upper gallery and upper-box audience. The magnificent building was sacrificed for a "quid of tobacco."

Farini came to England with a reputation as the rival of Blondin—the Blondin of Niagara Falls. As a high, and especially a low rope performer, no one could equal, far less rival Blondin. Farini brought his son with him—a young and attractive boy, who used to emphasise his sex by singing a song called "Wait till I'm a man." We waited a few years and he then appeared as "Lulu," a well made-up girl, who went through some exciting and clever catapultic gymnastics. When the proper time came he resumed his manly character, and retired from public life to go into business. In this he, or his father, was wise. Acrobats, like dwarfs, arrive at maturity quickly. Leotard had lived to forty, he would have no longer been Leotard. Farini was always a good and clever showman. He was more than this; he was an educated man-a master of languages, and made a very good record as an African traveller. In this he resembled Belzoni, the circus strong man and Egyptian explorer. Farini was always clever at mechanical contrivances, and if he is not entitled to rank as one of the world's great acrobats, he has much to console him. The "admirable Crichton," amongst all his accomplishments, could not throw a flip-flap like Edmund Kean, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Carey, of Richardson's Booth, Bartlemy Fair, although he

could probably have played Hamlet.

The splendour which distinguished the Alhambra Palace, did not extend to the Square, for a more forlorn and disgraceful wilderness could not be found

forlorn and disgraceful in the lowest part: shells and vegetabl and the Royal Gec great dustbin bore disfigurement. The of the day, and one was discovered pain hours it was the signature.

Dead cats, oyster imbered the ground, in the middle of the of decay and public the practical jokers daybreak the statue cus clown. For a few on, until the authori-

ties woke up and removed the scandal, and for a week or more the joke was the one and only topic. I am afraid the property-room of the Alhambra had some connection with the nine days' wonder, though the fact was never admitted. The Square went gradually from bad to worse, until a benevolent gentleman, Baron Grant, planted and adorned it at his own expense, to the everlasting disgrace of the ratepayers and parochial government.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Three years' apprenticeship—The ballet girls—Philosophical stage carpenters—Theatrical evolution—Henry Labouchere, M.P.—The Queen's Theatre in Long Acre—Diplomacy—Finance—Politics—A Rabelaisian Member—A successful journalist—A jocular manager, but a memorable management—Mrs. Labouchere—A splendid company—A bankrupt "store"—Lionel Lawson—The faiety Theatre scheme—Boucicault's suggestion—A short dialogue, but practical—My first "syndicate"—Mr. Architect Phipps—The dual plan—The title suggestive of lightness and frivolity—"Ancient lights"—A preliminary coup de théâtre—A fire—Rehearsals everywhere but in the theatre—A bet against the opening—Taken and woo.

FOR three years I lived and enjoyed this lifemy real apprenticeship to stage-management and theatrical business. I did not neglect my newspaper work, and I wrote Good Words articles on Alhambra paper. Though my name did not appear on the Alhambra programmes, my connection with the place was no secret. I never concealed it, and was never ashamed of any occupation from which I condescended to derive money. My pay was liberal and quite as much as I was worth. I was brought into contact with acrobats, music-hall singers, and ballet-girls, and found them on the whole very hard-working, honest, and companionable people. The few ballet-girls who stood out from the mass, principally owing to their great physical beauty, were the prize strawberries on the top of the pottle. They proved the power—the old and everlasting power-which existed long before Helen of Troy, of one of the greatest of God's gifts. Such as these were born for the stage, and the stage received them with open arms. The working bees of the theatrical hive looked at them and envied them.

One night during a ballet, two poor, begrimed stagecarpenters were sitting behind a wing, eating a bit of bread, cheese, and onion. They were men of few words, but much given to rumination. "Bill," said one, after a long silence, "if your time was to come over agen, wouldn't vou rather be petticoats than breeches?" "Bill," pause and equal

rumination said, very After the manner of closed the conversati

ı

The ballet-girl of little from her sister of course, advanced 1 of intellect. In 1865 see

nned if I wouldn't!"
pearian clowns, this

in essentials very) of 1865. She has, oards and the march isfied with a holiday

at Margate: in 1894 she likes to rub shoulders with royalty at Homburg, and to show herself in the winter at Monte Carlo. Who can blame her?

Certainly not the advocates of education.

My theatrical evolution was progressing, and the music-hall hack was on his road to become a theatrical manager. I was anticipated by one distinguished amateur, Mr. Henry Labouchere, M.P. The Queen's Theatre in Long Acre was built as a commercial speculation by Mr. Lionel Lawson, a leading proprietor of the Daily Telegraph, and its first tenant was practically Mr. Labouchere, who had not then turned his versatile abilities in the direction of Mr. Labouchere had begun life as a journalism. diplomatist. He had been an attaché in New York, I think, under Lord Lyons, and he occupied a similar position in Russia, I think, under Lord Loftus. He was, figuratively speaking, born in a banking-house and nursed in the lap of capital. His uncle, Lord Taunton, once a Chancellor of the Exchequer, had to make him his heir, and he never knew the chastening influence of poverty. If it had fallen to his lot to become a bankrupt, he would have been more amusing in that capacity even than Charles Mathews. Mr. Labouchere is a humourist, and likes to air his humour by telling stories against himself. Gifted with a rich imagination, and the power of racy narrative, he would be an admirable novel writer. If he followed in Disraeli's footsteps, he could write a book quite as spicy as "Coningsby," and perhaps even more spicy. In the House of Commons he is immensely popular; but he is too original and Rabelaisian for the ordinary vestryman-member. In a stupid world there is no more dangerous gift than wit and humour. Under his masquerading cap and bells there lies more sound sense, knowledge of the world, and unostentatious charity than could be swept up from the floor of the whole of the Commons' House of Parliament.

Mr. Labouchere had not been long the actual and responsible tenant of the Long Acre Theatre, before he had a little misunderstanding on the question of a landlord's rights and privileges with Mr. Lionel Lawson. When capital meets capital, then comes the tug of war: Mr. Labouchere bought the theatre.

As a manager he was not only an amateur, but a comic amateur. With his ample brains and money, if he had felt disposed, he could have made as great a commercial success of the excellent playhouse in the coach-building market, as he afterwards made of his newspaper Truth. He did not feel disposed; he had treated diplomacy as a joke, and he treated theatrical speculation in the same spirit. The man who sent his tavern and "seeing the world" bills in New York to the Foreign Office, because governments and departments are very fond of vouchers; the man who arrived two months late at St. Petersburg to join his ambassador, and defended himself on the ground that he had walked all the way because the "despatch" said nothing about "travelling expenses," was not

likely to treat the direction of a theatre very seriously. He gloried in stating the amount of the receipts, when they were excessively small, to humble the pride of certain members of his company. He said he used to placard these receipts in the green-room, to show the real "drawing" power of his authors and artistes. He went to America on business, and laughed at telegrams telling him the box-office results in London, when he was supposed to be making the amount a thousand times over by an hour's attendance in Wall Street.

With all this jocularity, the management of the Queen's Theatre was memorable, partly owing to the liberal views and administrative skill of Miss Henrietta Hodson (now Mrs. Labouchere), who was the resident and acting director. The company, in the middle of the sixties, would have put to shame a "patent theatre." At one and the same time it included Miss Adelaide Neilson, Mr. Henry Irving, Mr. J. L. Toole, Mr. Charles Wyndham, Mr. Ryder, Mr. Lionel Brough, Mr. John Clayton, Miss Ellen Farren, Mr.

have been made one of the most comfortable in London; but it was pulled down, almost as soon as it was built, and just as theatrical property was

doubling in value.

One evening Mr. Dion Boucicault called upon me at the Alhambra, coming up to my little room which commanded a fair view of the stage, and, through a peep-hole, a view of the whole front of the house. "You know Mr. Lionel Lawson?" he said. "Of course I do," was my answer; "and the whole family." "He's building a new theatre in the Strand, and you're the man to take it."

No more words were wasted. The next morning I called upon Mr. Lionel Lawson at No. 2, Brook Street, Hanover Square, and asked him if the report was true. "Quite true," he said. "Why do you ask?" "Because I want to take the theatre," was my answer. "All right!"—the dialogue continued. "Have you got any money?" "No debts, and about £200." "That's not much, is it?" "Not a great deal; but I suppose I can get more if I want it." "You shall have the theatre," said Mr. Lawson.

This conversation took place in the early part of 1868, and almost from that moment we became intimate friends and companions. Mr. Lawson was a great capitalist; but he might have been a pauper, or a speculative builder, as far as I was concerned. I asked for nothing but a lease—a lease of a theatre not built, and not named. I required no more at the moment. I had friends, foremost amongst whom was Mr. Frederick Boyle, a scribbler like myself, except that he loved scribbling, with a little capital and more influence. In a week or two, at his own suggestion, he had organised a little friendly syndicate, entirely unconnected with theatres and music-halls, who subscribed £5,000, and we were duly registered at Somerset House as "The New Theatres Company,

Limited." Most of our early meetings were held at the St. James's Hotel, Piccadilly, our discussions always ending in dinners prepared by Francatelli.

My syndicate trusted me, and I trusted my land-I was not an exacting tenant. He and Mr. C. J. Phipps, the architect, then comparatively unknown, had settle-, and had taken a g balcony on the few ideas-notably "dress circle tier," 1 âtre Lyrique (as it hâtelet Théâtre in was then called), or the Strand Music-Paris. Mr. Lawson hall and the adjoin next door to the ired the old houses Field office, and had and a mysterious tax. r Exeter Street, at

the back, with the exeter exchange which ran through the property, and Exeter Chambers, a column of rooms in Wellington Street, and certain houses in Catherine Street, opposite a building which had been a private theatre, a night saloon, a clubhouse, and was soon to become the office of the Echo newspaper. The new theatre had this advantage: long before "exits and entrances" were the objects of parochial solicitude;—its grand entrance was to be in the Strand, its pit and gallery entrances in Catherine Street, its stage-door in Wellington Street, and its royal entrance in Exeter Street. These wise provisions made it open on four sides.

The plan devised by Mr. Lawson and his architect was unique at the time, and has only been copied by one London compound building—the Criterion. It was to comprise a restaurant and a theatre under the same roof, so that people could dine and walk into the playhouse, or walk out of the playhouse into a supper-room. 1868 was not 1872, and the slap-you-and-put-you-to-bed at half-past twelve Act had not been passed by a Liberal Government. The theatre was one property; the restaurant another. I took the

theatre—a theatre without bars. These belonged to the restaurant.

The Strand Music-hall was the most rococo building ever constructed. To go into it was to court an attack of architectural indigestion. I took Captain Burton ("Arabian Nights" Burton) into it one night, and it reminded him of nearly everything he had seen in his wide and varied travels. It was not successful as a music-hall, although it was managed by a very capable and superior proprietor, Mr. Syers, who afterwards made a fortune at the "Oxford." When it was absorbed into Mr. Lawson's new theatre. forming little more than the grand entrance of the house, and the corner block of the restaurant, the Society of Architects must have felt like a patient who has had an oppressive load removed from his chesta stucco nightmare. As a music-hall it was managed on too advanced principles, and had the fatal fault of being a quarter of a century before its time.

The title of the new theatre was at last settled—and settled by Mr. Lawson. Like most things it was not original. I have thought, and said before to-day, that history is wrong, and that the world was never "created," as stated, but was really "adapted from the French." The new theatre was called "The Gaiety," and was the first theatre built in the present century with an Anglo-French name. We had had "Sans Souci," and "Sans Pareil," but no one hitherto had annexed the Galts. The title had the merit of brevity and simplicity; but its tendency was to condemn the house to a long course of lightness and frivolity. Luckily, in 1868, "cults," "status," and art, with or without a capital A, were not in everbody's mouth; ensemble, and other French slang, was not generally used; and well-drilled mediocrities were not the chosen ones of the stage and the pets of Society. The custom of engaging actors and actresses with a

repertory had not quite gone out of fashion; and an actor who asked and obtained fifteen or twenty pounds a week was expected to play a character like "Sir Peter Teazle" with something less than three months' drilling and three months' rehearsal.

"Adelphi guests" were a little too prominent, and were chaffed accordingly; but "Adelphi companies" of the old type could not be got for love nor

money.

While the builders were progressing with their work I was making my arrangements for the opening night, although it was six months distant. I emerged from the retirement of literature and the Alhambra, and had my name painted on a big board saying that the new theatre would be opened, when finished under my management. Displayed in the centre of the Strand, it was read by many thousands, who probably wondered who I was, and why I should manage a theatre. I was no chicken. I was going into a new business at the mature age of forty-one, when, if I had been in the employ of Government, both I and my superiors would have been considering

Saturday is the newspaper "day of rest," as no journal has to be produced for Sunday. The offices of the Post were calm and peaceful; but the scaffolding of the future Gaiety was like a busy beehive. Bricks were piled on bricks, joists and girders were laid down; more bricks were piled on more bricks; window frames were fixed in their places; cement was handed up and dabbed down; the dinner and tea hours were compounded for, and by six o'clock on Sunday morning, in a space of twenty-four hours, some time before the early Post workmen began to arrive, that side of the theatre was built, and the threatened injunction was killed before its birth. When Mr. (now Sir) Algernon Borthwick and the late Mr. Coward arrived on the Sunday afternoon they at once grasped the situation, and admitted the checkmate. The remedy for "damages" was never taken.

My scene painter was old Mr. Grieve—the best landscape artist in England—and his painting-room was in a notorious thieves' street off Drury Lane, at the side of the Middlesex Music-hall. He had a contract to paint the whole of the scenery for the three pieces, and about the beginning of December, 1868, three weeks or so before the date of opening, his painting-room was burnt down, and all the scenery The work, of he had completed was destroyed. course, had to be begun again, and an old floor-cloth manufactory was taken in a field at Camberwell, which looked like Noah's Ark, and rolled about in stormy weather like a captive balloon. The theatre was so backward, that all hope of rehearsing on the stage had to be given up. I rehearsed the operetta in one room at Evans's Hotel, Covent Garden; the chorus in another room, and the ballet in the singing saloon; while the comedy and the burlesque were being licked into shape at Astley's Theatre. My

chorus-master, Mr. Pittman, was kindly aided by Signor Bevignani, as a friend; the ballet-master and stage-manager ran from place to place; the dresses were being made in one shop, the properties in another; the band was drilled by Mr. Kettenus (my first conductor) at Covent Garden Theatre, and I was here, there, and everywhere, passing one of my authors in a cab one minute, and one of my actors in another cab the next minute. A railway manager wagered me five pounds that the house would never be ready. and I took the bet and won it; my acting manager went into hysterics with overwork, and I called him an idiot, and generally I was drunk and happy with We got possession of the stage nervous excitement. about three hours before we opened the doors; the stage-manager wanted to use the Royal Ante-Room for a property-store, and my refusal produced ructions; the paint in the front of the house was hardly dry, and as soon as we opened coats were damaged; my numerous notice papers about "No Fees" were treated with jocular contempt, and smothered with sixpences and fourpenny-pieces, and five minutes before we let



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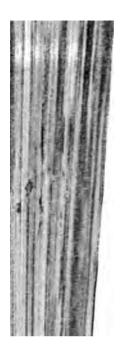
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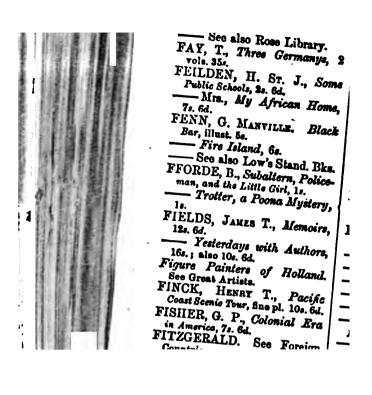
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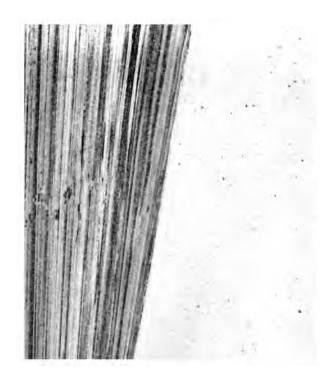
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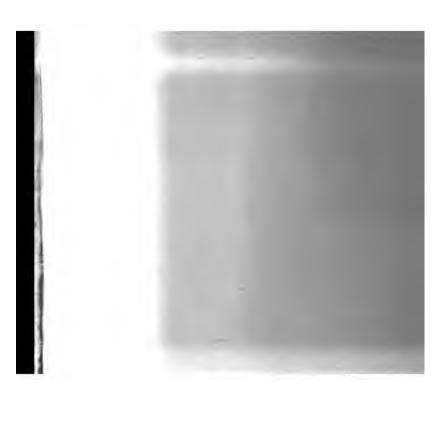
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